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CORNHILL

MAGAZINE

Edited by LEONARD HUXLEY

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THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY 1921.

THE SALT BLOOD OF ENGLAND.

• BY BENNET COPPLESTONE.

PART II.

THE KING'S SHIPS AND THE PEOPLE'S SHIPS.

ALTHOUGH the blood of England has been constantly refreshed by the salt strains of maritime invaders and settlers, and although no inland town lay more than a hundred miles from the deeply indented coastline, a sense of national responsibility for naval defence developed very slowly among our people. If coast towns were ravaged and burned that was the concern of the coast; if the kings could not maintain their communications with family possessions in France, so much the worse for the kings. The inland counties were indifferent so long as they were permitted to pursue in peace their lawful avocations. From the Norman Conquest until the days of the later Stuarts, for six centuries, there arose no national conception of the idea of a national navy. When, therefore, we read of the 'Royal Navy of the Cinque Ports,' or of the English claim to 'command' the Narrow Seas, we must bear in mind that the small ships of the Cinque Ports were no more than a local maritime militia with exceedingly limited functions, and that the 'command' of the Narrow Seas was quite as often in the hands of the French as it was in those of the English. Our naval strength would seem for centuries to have depended upon gusts of ambition or fear—the militarist ambition of individual kings to wage war overseas, or the terror of individual kings lest their English dominions should be in turn invaded. In the view of the people, defence and offence were the prerogatives of kings, to be carried out on their sole responsibility and at their sole expense. Parliament—after Parliaments came into being—was very careful indeed to wash its hands of the job. There were large merits in the system, for no king, however ambitious for conquest,

could involve his subjects in a 'national war.' They deferentially stood aside and left it to him.

But though the English people left to their kings the waging of, and payment for, both offensive and defensive war, and the royal means in money and material did not permit of war upon a large national scale, they did not wholly escape from the consequences in their persons and in their pockets. The king requisitioned their ships, levied ship-money to pay for them, and impressed their persons to sail and fight them. But since these powers of requisition and of impressment and the liability to 'danegeld' chiefly affected the coast—and for many centuries that part of the coast from Yarmouth round to Bristol which was exposed to oversea raids—those who took part by hand or purse in the king's naval wars were fighting for the safety of their own homes as well as for his ambitions or fears. And so far were they from objecting to fighting as a sport that, in the intervals of royal war, these fierce maritime ancestors of ours indulged themselves with piracy and private raids which became sometimes almost small wars, and with savage feuds against their own fellow-countrymen. They were no mild folk, those bloody buccaneers of East Anglia and the Cinque Ports and of the West Country, whose descendants man and fight our fleets of to-day.

There are not lacking many evidences of the savage, unruly temper of the Cinque Ports fishermen, whose blood has come down to us through twenty generations. We offer an example from the year 1297, when a quarrel between the Five Ports and Yarmouth came to a sanguinary head. The Ports had for many years established a fishing base at Yarmouth—the herring was the staple food of the English common people—but had gradually been ousted by the growth of Yarmouth itself. The hatred of the Ports for the French was as water is to wine in comparison with their hatred of the Yarmouth seamen. When, therefore, Edward I. assembled by requisition a large fleet at the Swyn, the Cinque Port crews fell upon those of Yarmouth and massacred them before the king's own eyes. The Ports burnt more than twenty of the Yarmouth ships, put to the sword every man of the crews upon whom they could lay their hands, and treated the king's commands to desist with savage contempt. It was not until the Ports had satisfied their thirst for Yarmouth blood that they permitted their king and commander to patch up a peace between the rival contingents. This incident throws a lurid light upon the discipline of the 'Royal

Navy of the Cinque Ports,' which was supposed to be the sure shield of our south-eastern coasts.

There was no Royal Navy in the modern sense during those centuries of which we write, but the kings had three means of collecting ships for maritime operations. There were the king's ships, the private property of the king, of which the numbers and equipment depended upon the interests and tastes of the king himself. They were not very numerous, and from the Conquest to the thirteenth century consisted chiefly of war galleys. The king's ships were oar-propelled, were equipped with an iron shod beam beyond the bows for ramming an opponent, and bore archers and soldiers in their fore and after castles. The largest may have accommodated some sixty men tightly packed.

Secondly, there were the small fishing and cross-channel trading boats of the Cinque Ports, boats of the old Viking pattern, high-charged at bow and stern, rapidly convertible into vessels of war by the erection fore and aft of wooden shelters for soldiers. In return for privileges of charter and pageantry, the dignity of a Lord Warden and the commercial prerogatives of the freemen or 'barons,' the Ports were bound to provide for the king's service fifty-seven ships for fifteen days a year without cost to his Majesty. The king paid—or owed—for their services beyond the free period of fifteen days. The small ships of the Ports carried a master, a boatswain, and some twenty men apiece, and may be termed a Dover flotilla. They discharged in some sort many centuries ago the functions which were discharged the other day by the Dover Patrol of Admirals Bacon and Keyes. Their area of operation was the narrowest part of the Narrow Seas, the neck of the Channel bottle. West of Portsmouth or north of the Thames estuary the ships of the Cinque Ports became of little account or value. Although the confederation of the Ports existed before the Norman Conquest, their brief, bright eminence in our sea history is due to the simple geographical fact that both coasts of the Narrow Seas were in possession of, or were claimed by, the Norman and early Angevin kings, and that it was vitally necessary to maintain sea communications between them.

The third and most important source of supply of ships for the king's service was by general requisition. Even before the ancient harbours of Kent and Sussex had been silted up under the remorseless Eastward Drift of the Channel's detritus, the deep-water ports of the Western Channel and the Severn Sea had outgrown them

in maritime consequence. Portsmouth and Dartmouth and Bristol—and the most prolific of all, Fowey, the 'Troy Town' of Sir Arthur Quiller Couch—do not bulk so prominently in the school books as the famous Five Ports (which in the Domesday Book numbered three and in their palmy days seven), but from very early times they contributed most of the ships required for overseas expeditions. Richard, for his crusading transports, had to call upon the larger craft of the west, and in the great requisition to assert lordship of the Narrow Seas, claimed and for awhile secured by Edward III., the Cinque Ports were not represented by more than one-seventh part of the English fleets. The splendid seamen of the Cinque Ports, who during four centuries, alone of our countrymen, possessed the elements of a permanent naval organisation, splendidly discharged their limited functions. Once certainly, in a famous action of which we will tell presently, by their courage, seamanship, and strategical initiative they saved this country from a French invasion which might have changed the current of our history. Alone, off the white cliffs of Dover, they fought a private Trafalgar. But the Cinque Ports had not in their own day, have not by succession in our day, much to do with the overseas Navy which was developed out of the greater ports of the south-west. Geography which had made them killed them; and ended by destroying them so thoroughly that golf is played now upon what were sheltered havens. Hastings, Sandwich, Romney, Hythe, together with the Ancient Towns of Winchelsea and Rye, have all gone as naval bases. Dover, rescued and refashioned by modern man, is the sole survivor, because it could not be permitted to die. It was wanted for the Dover Patrol, the mobile cork of the Channel bottle.

We have hitherto written of the fighting galley, an exotic type of warship which came to us from the Mediterranean, and of the Viking 'longship.' But a third and most important type of vessel was developing in the west which was destined to supersede in bulk and fighting efficiency both the galley and the longship, and to become the ancestor in direct line of the sailing fleets of Drake and of Nelson. The 'round ship,' the weight carrier, first emerges at King Richard's general requisition upon the western ports at the end of the twelfth century. It was a big-bellied vessel, bulging in great curves at bows and sides, and though as yet of not more than sixty to eighty tons burthen, already revealing indefinite possibilities of development. This was the busse, at first a big sailing barge, later to grow into the English galleon.

When the busse first looms out of the west, pushing its broad bows over the seas instead of cutting through them with the high, sharp stem of a galley, it was not a sea fighter. It was a merchant vessel, and was called up by Richard to serve as transport, horse boat, and store ship. He was bound for the Mediterranean, where he proposed to fight with galleys and to move his troops and stores in busses. The longships of the Cinque Ports, craft born of narrows and shallows and ill adapted for extensive voyages, remained behind to discharge their functions as guardians of the Straits. The busse, as yet, carried but one mast and sail and was steered still by the starboard oar, though the rudder was coming soon. Soon, too, was the busse to outgrow its single mast, and to divide its inner spaces by decks and half-decks. But when it first rolls into view it was little more than an open barrel-shaped, leewardly barge, a mere weight carrier, despised alike by the king's fighting galleys and by the subsidised longships of the Cinque Ports.

It was natural, indeed inevitable, that the English sailing ship of the future should come out of the west and not be developed from any existing type of the North Sea or Eastern Channel. The Western Channel and the Severn Sea open their wide jaws to the Atlantic ocean and abound with natural, deep-water harbours. The prevailing south-west winds, which for three quarters of the year blow from the Atlantic towards the eastern Narrows, cause the tides to flow up Channel faster than they ebb down. The flowing tides, rolling up shingle and heavily charged with suspended sand, are always washing more detritus towards the Narrows and the lower North Sea than they are bearing back towards the west. This Eastward Drift, together with the meeting off the south-eastern counties of the Channel flow with the north-about tidal flow which has passed round Scotland, has not only silted up the old harbours of Kent and Sussex, but has thrown down those millions upon millions of tons of sand which lie in shoals off the Flemish and Frisian coasts and off the opposite coasts of England. A study of old maps will show how potently the Eastward Drift has operated during a brief ten centuries of history, and when we reflect that before historic time it has been at work for hundreds of centuries, we can see that until man came with his steam dredgers the ports of the Narrows and lower North Sea could not possibly evolve the ocean-going ship. It was only here and there, as in the Thames estuary and the Scheldt, where a way through the shallows has been kept scoured out by the ebb and flow of fierce local tides, that a natural port has remained in being. The dredger in modern

days has fought and prevailed against the terrible Eastward Drift, but if the dredger had not come to their aid there could have been no Hamburg now nor Bremen, no Rotterdam nor Wilhelmshafen.

The ports of the wide Western Channel, and of the Severn Sea with its tremendous scouring tides, had, then, an overwhelming natural advantage both in depth of water and in open access to the Atlantic. Their ships, unconfined and free to develop in bulk, traded from very early days with the western ports of France and Spain, and with those of the Mediterranean. They became deep-sea traders, which threw off the shallow lines of the shoal-keeping longships and developed upon ocean-keeping lines of their own. Until the coming of the gun they remained mere despised weight carriers, transports, and store ships. The galley, with its one or two or three banks of oars, could beat them at ramming; the small longship with its low freeboard could the more readily range alongside an enemy and spew fighting men over the bulwarks; but when ramming and boarding became secondary to the gun in marine tactics the descendants of Richard's busses entered into their kingdom. 'As galleys were the principal vessels of war, more interest attaches to them than to mere transports, or what are called merchantmen,' writes Nicolas¹ in a moment of singular blindness. The galleys have gone utterly; the longships of the Cinque Ports, changed scarcely at all, remain as whaleboats—last summer we watched one put forth from Lyme, low-waisted, curved high at bow and stern, which, stripped of its mizen and drop keel, might have sailed with Canute; but the 'mere transport,' the busse, developing through the galleon of Drake and the line-of-battle ship of Nelson, is the parent to-day no less of the fighting *Hood* than of the commercial *Aquitania*.

Richard's busses were not all English. Many of them were swept up from the Atlantic ports of Brittany and Aquitaine, where similar conditions had led to the development of deep-water craft on the English western lines. Escorted by war galleys they put forth in the summer of 1190 and made their arduous and often stormy way to the Eastern Mediterranean. Our ancestors were bold seamen, but they never, unless driven by unavoidable necessity, attempted to keep the seas in winter. The campaigning season began in April and usually ended at latest in October. In winter by mutual consent wars were declared off. This far-away expedition of Richard, which in direct and indirect expenditure was to cost the country so dearly, is of outstanding historical interest for two

¹ *History of the Navy*, by Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas.

reasons. It first revealed the existence and the coming importance of the deep-sea busse, and by bringing the marines of Western Europe and of the Eastern Mediterranean into contact it revealed by how much the Eastern Mediterranean was in advance of Western Europe. It seems strange to look back from these days of pre-eminent British sea power and to realise that seven hundred years ago the Saracens of the Near East had evolved fleets which, in size of ships and in power of offence, were far in advance of ours. British sea power arose much later in the history of Europe than is altogether flattering to the vision of our maritime ancestors. They were for so long content with a precarious and intermittent 'command' of the Narrow Seas, a command which though claimed was never left unchallenged for very long, that the idea of a world predominance did not arise in their minds until necessity drove them to conceive it. It was not until, in absence of mind and as the result of salt-water restlessness rather than of conscious purpose, we had picked up oversea possessions in every Sea and Ocean outside Europe—it was not until then that the need for protecting that which we had won forced its way to our slow English intelligence. We developed sea power just as we had developed the necessity for sea power, in a strange vacancy of mind without any settled purpose whatever.

Richard's great crowd of busses—they were in no sense a fleet—left Dartmouth at the end of April and made very heavy weather of the voyage to Messina, which they reached some four and a half months later. They had already become so heavy and tublike that the oars which they carried were subsidiary to the big square sails. But a single sail and a steering paddle are poor equipment with which to battle against Atlantic gales even in high summer. We do not know how many were lost in those days when survival was hailed as a 'special miracle.' But fourteen large and a hundred smaller busses turned up at Messina, so that either the Atlantic must have been unusually kind, or there must have been many special miracles vouchsafed to the pious crusaders.

The larger busses must have been substantial boats. In addition to the crew of fourteen sailors they accommodated forty foot soldiers, forty armoured war horses, and stores of all kinds for twelve months. Spare boatswain's gear was provided upon a lavish scale. They had three rudders (paddles), thirteen anchors (used also as grappling-irons), thirty oars, two sails, and three sets of every kind of cordage. They could suffer sea losses of every description and still re-equip themselves without being driven to

seek a port of refuge in the hostile Eastern Mediterranean. The smaller busses were, it would appear, of similar bluff full-bellied type to their larger consorts, and it was these which—under the name of ‘cogs’—first developed into the round, heavy fighting ship. For the present, however, they also were ‘mere merchantmen.’

It was in the famous fight off the Syrian Coast, not far from Beirut, between Richard’s galleys and the Great Dromon of the Saracens, that the naval powers of East and West spring into vivid contrast. We may doubt whether this Great Dromon, concerning which the chroniclers become delirious with admiration, could have carried fifteen hundred men, but by Western standards she must have been an immense vessel. She had three masts and towered so high out of the water that the galleys which sought to engage her shrank into insignificance. ‘Except Noah’s ship none greater was ever read of.’ And in addition to her large complement of fighting men the Great Dromon was furnished with an abundant supply of Greek Fire in jars.

This Greek Fire, spouting furiously from brazen tubes and inextinguishable by water, was a dreadful weapon. Its flames illumine early naval battles in the East; it died away with the coming of gunpowder, and the world forgot its horrors until the *Flammenwerfer* of the Germans awoke its ancient memories. At a period when the West fought in galleys with no more deadly missiles than cross-bow shafts and heavy stones, the East had developed the three-masted sailing ship armed with Greek Fire.

What was this Greek Fire of which our ancestors write with such terror, and of which they themselves afterwards secured the secret? It was thrown from tubes set in the bows of vessels or fixed upon fortifications on shore. It ignited on exposure to the air, added to its flaming horrors a thick smoke and stifling stench, spread and increased in the presence of water, and could not be extinguished except under heaps of sand. The traditional ingredients are naphtha, pitch, and sulphur, but the more characteristic basis of the Fire which suggests itself to us is petroleum. Petroleum is superficially plentiful in Asia Minor and was well known there centuries before the days of King Richard. We conjecture that the Greek Fire of the Saracens did not greatly differ, save only in chemical refinement, from the *Flammenwerfer* of the Germans, and that it went out before gunpowder and the gun because its range of projection was so limited. Besides, in a wooden sail-

ing ship, stored in fragile jars, Greek Fire was an exceedingly uncomfortable cargo to have about.

Richard was himself in command of the English galleys upon whom fell the task of tackling the Great Dromon, and he had no smooth passage to victory. His first attacks were beaten off easily. From her lofty decks the Dromon showered arrows upon the galleys, and when they sought to run aboard of her she gave them a taste of Greek Fire. After a long and desultory fight, during which it may be presumed the jars of combustible became exhausted, Richard at last succeeded in getting to close quarters. He showered threats of crucifixion and torture upon his crews should the Dromon succeed in escaping, and they, poor devils, with fire in their faces and Richard's torture in the offing, made what the chronicler calls 'a virtue of necessity.' They obtained control of the Dromon by a very remarkable manœuvre. The galleys ran up astern of the enemy and bold men, diving overboard, fixed ropes to her steering paddle. By hauling on these ropes, this way and that, they steered her as they pleased. Boarders then clambered up the tall sides, but were speedily flung off again. At last the correct method of attack suggested itself. The offensive power of the galley lay in the iron-shod beam which was set in advance of the cutwater. While the helpless Dromon was manœuvred into a position convenient to the rammers—by means of the ropes fixed to her steering paddle—Richard ranged up a detachment of his galleys and sent them at full speed against her water-line. The iron beaks of the galleys burst through the sides of the Dromon and the battle was over. The big ship, the 'Queen of Ships' in the eyes of our ancestors, filled and sank, and of her crew fifty-five only were saved—in order that they might teach their victors the construction of military engines! There was not much of chivalry in the days of chivalry. One cannot but feel that though the galleys sank the Dromon the honours of the day rested with the defeated Saracens. She, a single ship, had against her Richard's whole fleet of war galleys; she fought until her ammunition was exhausted and then went down with colours flying. Just as, four centuries later, Grenville's *Revenge* fought an armada of Spaniards and lives immortal, so the Great Dromon fought an armada of galleys and lives immortal. Crude victories by mere numbers never bestow immortality upon their victors.

The many-oared galley, from the Greeks, through the Carthaginians to the Romans, and in later days of the Portuguese

and Spaniards, was the typical warship of the Mediterranean. It was always exotic in northern and western waters. In English hands the galley had no future, though its free power of quick manœuvre—of which the fight with the Great Dromon serves for an example—made it a sea weapon dear to fighting kings. The native English ships were the small craft of the Cinque Ports which kept the Narrow Seas, and the deep-water busses of the West. We must not underrate the services discharged during so many years by the longships of the Cinque Port flotilla, manned by hardy seamen of the Kent and Sussex beaches. These longships, in the hands of English sailors, tended to become narrower in the beam and deeper in draught, less dependent upon oars and more dependent upon sails. Oars were carried, but they grew into an auxiliary instead of a primary equipment. It has been our care to preserve very distinctly the essential difference between the longship type, the principal ship of the Cinque Ports, a direct descendant of the Saxon 'æscs,' and the round-ship type, the weight carrier, an independent development of the Western Channel and the Severn Sea. In their later days the Cinque Port merchants used cogs, or small busses; but they were importations and were nowise akin to the longship. The longship was incapable of development and has remained practically without change to this day.

It is clear that the regular naval establishment first set up by John did not contemplate deep-sea expeditions. His Keeper of the King's Galleys was also Keeper of the Sea Ports, and though the official seaports included Portsmouth—thus early raised into a naval base and equipped with a primitive dockyard—they did not take the harbours of the west within their purview. The naval establishment was thus restricted to the one purpose of providing and equipping ships to maintain communications in the Narrow Seas. The more imminent became the loss of John's continental possessions the more eager he grew to strengthen himself in the Narrows. Captain Montagu Burrows¹ maintains that the Cinque Port flotilla was the primary and the king's galleys the secondary naval force. We venture to disagree. For the discharge of its strictly limited functions—the defence of the Straits and Eastern Channel—the Cinque Port organisation was of supreme importance. But it was nothing more and never sought to be anything more. It is bad history to represent this local defence force—though it made brief expeditions to Scotland and Ireland—as the maritime germ from which sprang the deep-sea Navy of England.

¹ *Historic Towns: Cinque Ports.* Montagu Burrows.

How magnificently the Cinque Ports discharged their own special functions is revealed by the Battle of the Straits. John, cast forth from Normandy and Anjou, and vanquished by enemies at home and abroad, had died leaving a son of ten years old, and England was upon the verge of becoming a jewel in the French Royal Crown. Prince Louis of France held London and part of the home counties, many of the most powerful English barons were ranged upon his side, and the outlook for an independent England was of the blackest. Two events saved us—a defeat of Prince Louis on land at Lincoln, and the complete destruction of his supporting fleet by the Dover flotilla. Just as English barons were helping the French on land, so a notorious freebooter, once an adherent of John—named Eustace the Monk—was commanding the French ships at sea.

Eustace had no reason to contemplate defeat, still less destruction, when he put forth from Calais on August 24, 1217, with eighty ships and attendant small craft to make for the Thames estuary, and to carry aid and comfort to Prince Louis. The battle of Lincoln had been fought in May, but London and the whole of Kent, except only Dover, was still in the hands of Louis. From the heights of Dover Castle, Hubert de Burgh, the King's Justiciary and Governor, watched the French ships sweep across the Straits of which he was the appointed guardian. He could not himself muster more than sixteen large ships and some twenty smaller ones. In ships he had not half the strength of the enemy, in men he probably had not one fourth the strength, yet he did not hesitate. 'Go thou and die,' said many of the bishops and knights who were around him; 'we are not sea-soldiers, nor pirates, nor fishermen.' But the men of the Cinque Ports were fishermen and sea-soldiers—and pirates too, in their off-time—and blithely they followed Hubert and d'Albini to the ships.

The Battle of the Straits was not only the first considerable sea engagement between the French and the English in our annals; it was also the first engagement in which the English demonstrated their mastery of sailing tactics and their love for the 'weather gauge.' The wind was from the south, blowing freshly, and before it the French ships sped steering wide of the South Foreland. The English, with the wind on their starboard beam, reached out toward the east until the last Frenchman had crossed their bows. This manœuvre of taking the wind of an opponent was then so new that even Eustace was deceived, and thought that Hubert was merely bent upon a counter-raid against Calais. But he was soon to be undeceived. Round came the compact English squadron,

and now in full possession of the weather gauge the hardy seamen of the Ports broke in a devastating flood upon the rear of the straggling French lines. The smaller force took the larger force in detail and smashed it up in detail. Hubert's men grappled ship after ship by the stern, cut down the sails upon the crews, and slaughtered them as they struggled entangled. With the wind blowing from the south the leading French ships could not turn back to the help of the rear divisions. Hubert driving forward smashed up his opponents one after another. His galleys rammed them and his longships boarded them. There has rarely in naval annals been so overwhelming a victory. Out of the whole French fleet only fifteen vessels escaped, the remainder were either sunk or captured. As a fitting conclusion to the victory the head of Eustace the Monk, renegade and French commander, was cut off and stuck upon a pole. That battle, which was fought in full view of Dover Castle and must for the English have been a heartening spectacle, may fairly rank as one of the most decisive in our history. It was exclusively a Cinque Port battle, and revealed with what shattering completeness, even before the coming of guns, a small well-trained sea force could destroy a haphazard collection of ships. The French at that time had nothing to set against the Cinque Port organisation, and were destroyed for lack of it.

Men are of more interest than ships, for ships are nothing but the expression in material of the brains and souls of the men. What manner of men were these far-off ancestors of ours, whose tiny longships fished and traded fearlessly in the Narrow Seas, and who were as fiercely willing at any moment to fight as to trade? They were skilful, hardy seamen, that is certain; they were terrible and ruthless sea-fighters, that also is certain; but of discipline they knew little. They were in the Cinque Ports a privileged caste to whom the interest of the Ports was everything and the higher interest of England nothing. We have told how they fell upon and massacred their fishing rivals of Yarmouth. In a spirit as savagely exclusive they waged private internecine war with the westerly ports of Poole and Weymouth and Lyme. They yielded allegiance to their sovereign for so long as it marched with their privileged interests, but their records reveal no sense of a wider national patriotism. With the Flemings and the French and the Normans they were perennially at war. They were almost as great an embarrassment to their friends as they were a terror to

their foes. Nicolas bluntly writes down the Ports as 'a nest of robbers,' though Captain Burrows, anxious to say the best for his protégés, contends that their manifold piracies and private wars may be defended as 'reprisals.' It is very much a matter of viewpoint. If your ships are captured and your ports are ravaged by an unofficial enemy he is manifestly in your eyes a pirate of the reddest red. If you in your turn sink his ships and burn his sea bases you are incontestably engaged upon the legitimate operation of just reprisal. The doctrine of reprisal will justify anything. It has made the name of privateer to stink in our modern nostrils. There was always in the Narrow Seas from the twelfth to the seventeenth century an abundance of excuse for unauthorised reprisals. But the law of reprisal and the law of discipline cannot live side by side.

Both coasts of the Narrow Seas during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries entered heartily into the spirit of the game—that he should take who had the power and he should keep who could. The Cinque Ports, when carpeted by their kings and roundly accused of piratical practices, adopted an attitude of pained indignation. Were they not defending themselves from unprovoked aggression, and had they not been careful to hoist the war flag? Was it not, they urged, the immemorial law of the sea that the war flag covered with a mantle of legality all sanguinary deeds done beneath its spreading folds?

Just four years before that memorable requisition of 1297, when the seamen of the Cinque Ports fell upon and slaughtered their rivals of Yarmouth—an exploit of which the king himself was a privileged spectator—the Cinque Ports arranged and fought an astonishing private duel with their opposite numbers across the Narrow Seas. We must allow that the Normans began it by killing an English sailor from a ship which had put in for water. The English ship bolted out to sea pursued by many Norman vessels. Six English ships then dashed to the aid of the first one, but overpowered by numbers lost two ships, of which the crews were immediately hanged at the yardarms of the Norman conquerors. Thus decorated, the Norman ships cruised up and down the Channel and made no distinction 'between an Englishman and a dog.' It should be observed that all this happened in time of a nominal peace and was at once replied to by the usual reprisals. So far nothing had occurred which was not common form in the Narrow Seas.

But what followed was unique in naval annals. Reprisals on a small scale proved unsatisfying to both sides, so it was formally arranged to settle the dispute in style by means of a fully staged naval battle in mid-Channel at a time and place appointed. The day selected was April 14, 1293, and the place was marked by anchoring a large empty ship. The kings of England and France were not favoured with an invitation to be present, nor was their consent asked for. Both sides beat up recruits to their war flags, the 'baucons,' which in the view of the 'marinage' conferred legality upon anything. The English enlisted Irish and Danish helpers, while the Normans sought and obtained assistance from French, Flemish, and Genoese sailors. The two fleets, well armed, met at the rendezvous—that empty anchored ship in mid Channel—and got to business. A high wind was blowing and bringing with it blinding sheets of hail and snow. We are not told if the fleets tossed for position, or if they just manœuvred for the weather gauge. It is an important question, for the leeward position, with hail and snow beating upon the faces of the combatants, must have been a very grave handicap. Neither do we know the relative strengths of the fleets. Stories of battles are written by the conquerors, and it happened that the Cinque Ports with their Irish and Danish allies won very handsomely. The chroniclers, eager to make the most of the victory, give the English sixty ships and their opponents more than two hundred! Humph! We must be content with the broad fact that the English side won. King Edward, it may be noted, though he asked the Ports for an explanation in writing—and they obliged with a dissertation on the original sin of the Normans and the all-covering virtues of the war flag—did not inquire very closely into the matter. He was shortly afterwards to launch an invasion against France, and he was probably not sorry that a considerable number of French and Norman ships should have been put out of action. And since he would need the services of the Ports it was in his interest to keep their tempers sweet. At his general requisition for the French expedition their seamen showed, by slaughtering the Yarmouth contingent, what might happen if he tried to enforce discipline upon the Ports.

The truth is that during their prime, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Cinque Ports were stronger far than their kings, and knew it. The royal force of war galleys was never large and could not be employed to enforce discipline upon the

Ports. Very much the same conditions existed upon the other side of the Channel, except that there was in Normandy and France no organisation which could parallel that of the Cinque Port Confederacy. On both sides privately owned ships, which could at will be changed from traders to fighters and back again, waged what they called piracy or reprisal, according to their point of view at the moment. The kings, both French and English, winked at the lawlessness of their subjects because they could not suppress it, and did not really wish to suppress it. War was their business, not peace—no spirited crowned head had any use for so dull a period as peace—and a continual private war in the Narrow Seas kept one side from becoming overwhelmingly strong. The doctrine that before one could invade an enemy across the seas one needed 'command' of those seas had then no existence in military minds. The military mind is slow to admit it even now. For centuries England asserted lordship over the Narrow Seas, but the periods during which lordship actually rested in England were not of long duration. In mediaeval England, just as in Saxon England, our sea power would wax until it almost seemed to have become established, and then—suddenly—it would topple down in ruin. For many centuries, though we were and are a people of maritime blood, we had as a nation no conception of the importance of sea power, and no national sense that responsibility for it was any business of ours.

(To be continued.)

JOHN KEATS AND WINCHESTER.

BY W. COURTHOPE FORMAN.

JUST over a hundred years ago Keats, flying from the terrors of consumption, the White Death that had snatched his brother Tom, and that already clutched at his own throat with icy fingers, journeyed to Shanklin, hoping that the softer air of South Hants would benefit his failing health. Writing to Fanny Brawne—'the beautiful girl whom I love so much'—in the early part of August 1819, he says 'This day week we shall move to Winchester, for I feel the want of a library': and he adds 'At Winchester I shall get your letters more readily; and it being a cathedral city I shall have a pleasure, always a great one when near a cathedral, of reading them during the service, up and down the aisle.' A sentiment this last which would hardly have appealed to the sympathies of the Dean and Chapter of that period.

As for the library he was destined to be disappointed, but doubtless he paced the noble nave of the Cathedral perusing Fanny's letters. Keats seems suddenly to have taken a violent aversion to Shanklin. 'I long to be off for Winchester,' he writes to his mistress, 'for I begin to dislike the very doorposts here.' These words were written on August 9, and on August 17 Keats is telling Fanny Brawne how he has been in England's ancient capital for four days. Now where in Winchester was the poet lodged? The question has often been asked, but never, as far as I am aware, has it been answered satisfactorily. Yet in one letter of his to Fanny Brawne, and in another written to his brother George, he gives certain 'pointers' as to the whereabouts of the 'tolerably good and cheap lodgings' which he and his friend Brown occupied. Keats most certainly did not lodge in the High Street—his abode was in one of those 'maiden-lady-like side streets' which he describes 'with doorsteps always fresh from the flannel,' and with knockers 'that have a staid, serious, nay almost awful quietness about them.' His room, he tells Fanny Brawne, is 'large and looks out on the beautiful blank side of a house,' which he much prefers to the view of the sea from his Shanklin window. Unfortunately the poet tells us nothing of his lodgings that will absolutely identify them. The son of his landlady, 'not quite a proficient,' whose fiddle now and again went 'like a gimlet' through his sensitive ears, finds no place, alas! among Winchester's worthies. But in another letter to his brother George, Keats writes as follows:

'I take a walk every day for an hour before dinner, and this is generally my walk : I go out the back gate, across one street into the Cathedral yard, which is always interesting ; there I pass under the trees along a paved path, pass the beautiful front of the Cathedral, turn to the left under a stone doorway—then I am on the other side of the building—which, leaving behind me, I pass on through two College-like squares, seemingly built for the dwelling-place of deans and prebendaries, garnished with grass and shaded with trees ; then I pass through one of the old city gates, and then you are in one College Street, through which I pass, and at the end thereof crossing some meadows, and at last a country alley of gardens, I arrive—that is my worship arrives—at the foundation of St. Cross which is a very interesting old place, both for its Gothic tower and alms square, and for the appropriation of its rich rents to a relation of the Bishop of Winchester.'

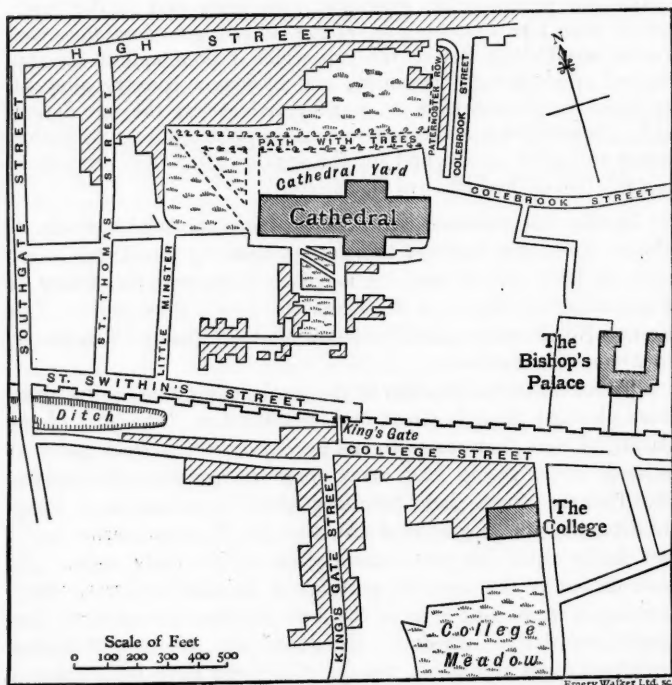
In this last sentence Keats touched on an Augean stable of abuses, which was destined to be swept clean by the Master of the Rolls in 1853, who in scathing language denounced the doings of Francis North, Master of St. Cross for nearly fifty years. This Francis North was a son of Brownlow North, Bishop of Winchester, to whom Keats refers.

To return to the question of the poet's lodgings, some inquirers have pictured them in Great or Little Minster, south-west of the Cathedral, but that seems to me impossible—such back gates as existed would surely lead *away from* not towards that edifice. St. Thomas Street has been regarded by some as a likely locality, but its geographical situation to the west seems to fit but badly with the poet's description of his daily walk. My own choice is the western portion of Colebrook Street, which forming a right angle with the rest of the thoroughfare, lies north-east of the Cathedral. Here there are still ancient houses with backyards and gates, though the yards have been covered with modern buildings. The back gates open on Paternoster Row which runs immediately behind this part of Colebrook Street, and may possibly have had at one time more houses than the two that figure in this year's Winchester directory. Crossing Paternoster Row one enters on the 'long paved path' with the trees on either side that leads to the west front of the Cathedral, and so we can follow Keats in that daily walk through King's Gate and 'one College Street' into the delightful water meadows behind the College, which extend between Winchester and St. Cross a mile or so to the south.

A map of Winchester, published within a few years of the date
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that Keats was there, shows Colebrook Street with its right-angled bend and the path between the trees, running from east to west on the north side of the Cathedral, and the 'square' on the other side leading through King's Gate.

That daily walk must have taken Keats past the house where Jane Austen had died only two years before. I wonder if the



poet had read or even heard of the brilliant novelist whose death from consumption occurred only four years before his own from the same terrible disease. If he knew her name or work it seems strange that his letters make no mention of her. Keats's stay in Winchester was not a long one, but is nevertheless memorable, for here he finished 'Lamia' and revised 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' he tells us; but that wonderful air of the chalk downs outside the city, worth as he said 'sixpence a pint,' failed, alas! to arrest the fell complaint from which he died in Rome less than two years later.

LEAVES FROM A LAWYER'S CASE-BOOK.

A STORY OF THE SEA.

BY THE RT. HON. SIR. EDWARD CLARKE, K.C.

DURING five days in March 1894 Mr. Justice Gorell Barnes (afterwards Lord Gorell), a Judge of the Admiralty Division, assisted by two Trinity Masters and a special jury, were engaged in trying an action in which the owner of the fishing-smack *Fortuna* sued the owners of the steam trawler *Ibis* for the damage caused by the sinking of the former vessel by collision with the steam trawler.

Never before or since has the Court been so constituted; but the learning of the Judge, the experience of the Trinity Masters, and the intelligence of the special jury were all needed, and were fully taxed, in dealing with the extraordinary case which was laid before them.

The plaintiff's claim was for damages for the loss of his ship through the negligent navigation of the *Ibis*.

The defendant pleaded that the collision was brought about by the wilful act of Henry Rumbell, the master of the *Ibis*, and that Henry Smethurst, the plaintiff, had incited and procured the said Henry Rumbell to sink the *Fortuna* at sea.

There was no question of the amount of the damages; that was to be the subject of a separate inquiry.

Nor was there any suggestion of personal motive, whether of interest or ill-will, on the part of Rumbell. If the sinking of the *Fortuna* was wilful, then there was little reason to doubt that Smethurst was a guilty man.

It was in fact a criminal trial in which the accused came into Court, declared his innocence, and claimed an acquittal.

And no Court has ever listened to a more strange and dramatic story than that which was unrolled during the five days' hearing of this case.

The story begins in July 1893, when Henry Rumbell was appointed captain of the *Ibis*, one of three steam trawlers which belonged to Messrs. Hamilton of Boston, but had for some years been managed for them by Mr. Henry Smethurst of Grimsby, and had, with his fishing fleet, traded from that port.

Mr. Henry Smethurst was at this time, and had been for many

years, one of the most respected and influential townsmen of Grimsby. He was an alderman of the town and a justice of the peace, a man of substantial means, and of the highest repute for the uprightness and usefulness of his public and private life.

He owned a fleet of twenty-two fishing-smacks which traded from and to Grimsby, and were all insured in the Grimsby Mutual Insurance Society, of which he was one of the directors. Indeed, he was the largest insurer, for of the £64,000 which represented the whole liability of the Company, his share was £19,000, so that of any loss which the Company sustained he would have to bear almost one-third. The fact that the other directors and members of the Insurance Society were engaged in the same trade, and were owners of smacks and trawlers, made it certain that the vessels would be insured for reasonable amounts, and that the circumstances of any loss which they were called upon to bear would be carefully considered by interested and experienced persons.

One of Smethurst's fleet of fishing-smacks was the *Fortuna*, a boat of 120 tons, which some years before had cost £1600 to build, and on which Smethurst had lent on mortgage £1100. In 1892, £1000 was owing on this mortgage and he was mortgagee in possession. She was insured with the Company for £975.

In the actual management of this fleet, and of the vessels belonging to other owners for whom he acted as agent, and the engagement of masters and crews, Smethurst himself took little part; he had in his employment a trusted superintendent of the fishing fleet, one John Hill, to whom these details were left.

Among the men who for some years had been shipped on one or other of his boats were two brothers, Harry and Walter Rumbell. Harry, the elder, was a man of forty years of age, who had spent his life in fishing-boats, was an expert navigator, and was popular with his comrades for his courage, his cheerful good-humour, and his generous good fellowship in the ups and downs of their precarious calling.

He had married twenty years before, but the union was not a happy one, and he had been separated from his wife for many years. At this time he had been living for rather more than two years with a girl of loose character but of respectable family and connexions in Grimsby, named Harriet Rushby. She was a pretty girl; he was passionately fond of her, and all his earnings were spent in giving her pleasure.

In July 1893, when Rumbell was made captain of the *Ibis*, the

Hamiltons decided that in future their boats should trade from and to Boston instead of Grimsby, so Rumbell tried to persuade his mistress to come and live with him at Boston. This, however, she refused to do. Perhaps this was the real reason why, in disobedience to orders, he came back from his first trip on the *Ibis* to Grimsby instead of to Boston, saying that for the class of fish the fleet was bringing back there was a very poor market at Boston.

Hamilton was angry and was for discharging him, but Smethurst pointed out that the *Ibis* had been more successful than any other of twenty steamers that came in together, and had made £114 by the trip, and it was arranged that he should sail her again. He started for this second trip on the 10th August, and on the 21st he came back to Grimsby with the news of the sinking of the *Fortuna*. In the different accounts given then and later of the circumstances of the mishap there were no great discrepancies.

It was agreed that 'the collision occurred about 6 o'clock in the morning on Thursday, August 17, 1893, in the North Sea, about 250 miles east of the Spurn, the weather at the time being fine and clear with a moderate breeze blowing from the north or north-west.'

It appeared that a day or two earlier the trawling-net of the *Ibis* had been damaged and that Rumbell tried to get from some of the other vessels in the fleet twine to repair it. He got some, but not enough, and on the Thursday morning he steamed up to within hailing distance of the *Fortuna*, where the crew were on deck cleaning fish and shouted to ask if they could give him some twine. The request was not answered, perhaps it was not heard, and Rumbell steamed abreast, went round the *Fortuna*, and came up again on her port side, intending this time to come closer, and steering towards her. Just at this time the wind dropped, and the *Fortuna* with sails flapping fell off from her course and drifted astern. The *Ibis*, with Rumbell at the helm, came on and crashed into her port side. Each vessel had a boat out in tow and the crew of the *Fortuna* were got on board the *Ibis*, but the smack went down so quickly that they could save nothing but themselves. Rumbell did give orders to stop the engine and to go astern, but these orders were given too late and almost at the moment of the collision.

Directly the master of the *Fortuna* came on the *Ibis*, Rumbell took him to the wheel and showed him that it had jammed. In fact the steering gear of the three trawlers belonging to Hamilton

had been previously found to be defective, and an attempt had been made, not very successfully, to improve that of the *Ibis*. Her owners at once had inquiries made as to the circumstances of the collision. Statements were taken from the crews of the two boats, an engineer was sent to examine the steering gear of the *Ibis*, and although in a letter to Smethurst of August 24, Hamilton said 'Some strange things are being said *re* the collision which might lead to grave trouble to the skipper if they reach the ears of the underwriters,' their inquiries seem to have satisfied them that the collision was accidental.

On September 4 a suit was instituted in the Admiralty Division in which Smethurst was the nominal plaintiff and the Hamiltons the nominal defendants. In fact neither of them had much to do with the conduct of the proceedings. The Grimsby Mutual Insurance Company were the real plaintiffs, and certain underwriters with whom the *Ibis* was insured under a policy which contained a collision clause making them responsible for damage caused by her as well as for damage which she sustained were the real defendants. The claim made was for £1200 as the value of the *Fortuna*, and £91 for the property lost by the crew.

The solicitor for the underwriters now made further inquiries, and on October 10 filed an admission of liability and made an offer of £800, which was at once declined. The liability of the owners of the *Ibis* was, however, limited by her tonnage to £960—£8 per ton—and the difference between this and the sum offered was hardly sufficient to justify the cost of a reference as to damages, and in November the Company offered to accept the £800 for the vessel if the £91 for the property of the crew were also paid.

Meanwhile, on October 18, the Company paid Smethurst a cheque for the insurance money of £975. Of this sum he had himself to find £280, so that he must in any case be a loser by the sinking of the *Fortuna*, assuming her to be insured for her true value, although if the underwriters agreed to pay the £891 his loss would only be about £30.

The matter was still in friendly and leisurely negotiation when a strange and terrible event happened.

Upon hearing of the collision Hamilton had very naturally instructed Smethurst to discharge Rumbell, and Smethurst refused to allow him to be employed on any of his own boats. For a time Rumbell was unemployed. There was a curious mystery about the way in which he spent this time of idleness. The trip on which

the collision took place was not a successful one ; when he came back to Grimsby he had very little money to draw, and he complained to his associates of his hard luck.

But during the following month he was spending money freely. He and his mistress went to Yarmouth and to London : he bought her presents ; and it was said at the trial that on one occasion, soon after he had complained of having no money, he came away from Smethurst's office and jingled a handful of gold. Smethurst said that he had spoken to Rumbell about this excursion to London and that Rumbell explained that he had won £20 in betting on a horse race, and that he had pawned his watch and chain. He denied that after the collision he had given Rumbell any money at all.

This holiday ended, Rumbell pressed Mr. Hill to employ him again, and in October, when the Smethurst fleet was about to go to sea, it happened that the captain of the fishing-smack *Nightingale* fell ill and Rumbell took his place. It was expected that he would be away from Grimsby for at least a month, and before he went he arranged with Harriet Rushby's aunt that the girl should come to live with her during his absence. This being settled he left Grimsby on October 28.

This voyage also was unfortunate. November was a month of violent storm, with heavier loss of life and property in the fishing fleets than had been known for many a year. The *Nightingale*, with damaged sails, had to put back to Grimsby, and about six o'clock in the evening of November 7, Rumbell unexpectedly returned to his lodgings. He changed his clothes and hurried off to the house where he expected to find Harriet Rushby. She was not there, and he was told that during his ten days' absence she had never been there at all.

He was passionately fond of the girl and had done his utmost to get her away from her evil companions. Earlier in the year she had been ill and had gone to London to the University College Hospital and afterwards to a nursing home. He had paid the expenses of the journey, and from time to time had sent her money, and written the most loving letters. In one of these he said, 'You little darling, you know I love you. I hope this illness will learn you a lesson. If you were to go on with that wicked life again you would drive me mad.' He had begged her to go and live with him at Cleethorpes, and when she refused to leave Grimsby he thought that he had put her in safety in her aunt's house.

Now he found she had never been there, and he learned from a girl he met in the street that she had been seen going about with different men. He had just been told this when he passed a gunsmith's shop, and he went in and bought a six-chambered revolver and fifty cartridges, and got the gunsmith to load the weapon and show him how to use it. Then he went to look for Harriet. He found her in a public-house with a woman who kept a brothel in one of the poorer streets of Grimsby.

He joined them, had some drink, then went to a music-hall, and after the performance was over, went back with them to this woman's house. A man was there who left soon afterwards, and Rumbell began taunting the girl about him. They had more drink, and Rumbell, not quite sober, grew quarrelsome and struck Harriet on the face more than once. Then he half persuaded, half forced her to go up to a bedroom with him.

Presently the three or four people sitting below heard the sounds of a quarrel, and one of them crept upstairs, tried the door of the room, and found it locked, and heard the girl say 'Oh, Harry, you would not murder me in my sins.'

The listener fled downstairs, and there was a short silence. He had given her time to say a prayer. Then two shots were heard and the sound of a heavy fall, and then the noise of something being dragged across the room. Then Rumbell came down. Blood was on his hands, but no one tried to detain him, and he passed silently through the frightened group and left the house. It was now past midnight.

He went to his lodgings, woke his landlord, and told him what he had done. He was advised to go and give himself up, so he washed his hands and went to the Town Hall, and finding on the steps a sergeant of police he told him he had murdered a woman.

Early the next morning Smethurst heard the news and he went at once to the lock-up, and in the presence of two other persons had an interview with Rumbell. The only talk was about his treatment in prison, and the arrangements for his defence. Smethurst undertook to pay for extra food to be supplied to him while in prison, and promised to find some money for solicitor and counsel. He kept his promise. Others helped, for when the full story was told there were many who felt some sympathy for Rumbell, and when his trial was coming on at the Assizes Smethurst sent a further £20 to ensure his having a good counsel to defend him.

A Mrs. Burnett, who kept a temperance hotel at Grimsby, and was well known in the town for her constant activity in charitable works, wrote to his mother, who lived at Yarmouth, asking her to come over to see her son, and herself met her at the station when she and his sister arrived on November 12. But Rumbell had been removed the day before to Lincoln gaol, so Mrs. Burnett kept them at her house until the following day and then took them to Lincoln, and after the interview brought them back to Grimsby and paid all their expenses.

The mother, before she returned home, went to see Smethurst at his office. She was seventy years old, and told him she was very poor, and he gave her £10.

He went over to Lincoln on November 23, when the date of the Assizes was drawing near, and again had a conversation with Rumbell, of course in the presence of the warders, with regard to his defence.

On November 29 the trial came on before Mr. Justice Charles, and the facts which have been here outlined were given in detailed evidence. Mr. Stanger, a very able Queen's Counsel on the circuit, was briefed for the prisoner, but no real defence was possible.

When asked if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him Rumbell made a remarkable speech. In firm and clear and deliberate tones he said 'I am very fond of the girl and spent all my two years' earnings upon her or rather more, and of course I killed her, and it is right I should be hung. I am very well satisfied with the jury for bringing me in guilty. I would sooner have that than a verdict of manslaughter. I just ask you kindly to grant me, as I am a great smoker, as many cigars and cigarettes as I can blow out from now to the time I die, so that I can pass away the time and not make any break down. I wish to die like an English hero. Of course it is a disgrace to my country and to my friends and comrades. But I hope when I die I shall see the girl I shot. I know if she gets to know I am anything like to break down in this simple little favour she would be doing nothing but taking a rise out of me and poking fun at me in the next world. If you grant me that little favour that is all I require. That is all I have to say.'

The day fixed for the execution was Tuesday, December 19.

On Friday, December 8, Walter Rumbell came to Smethurst with a curious application, almost a demand, for money.

He said that he had seen his brother in Lincoln gaol and Harry

had told him to come to Smethurst and ask for £30 for himself. He said he was to take the money to the gaol and show it to his brother to satisfy him that it had been paid. He gave no explanation of the demand, did not suggest that there was any money owing; simply named the sum and insisted that it should be paid. Smethurst refused to pay him anything and sent him away.

The following Tuesday morning he came again, but with a very different story. He said that his brother, whom he had seen again at the prison, had told him that Smethurst had shipped him on the *Ibis* in order to run down the *Fortuna*, and had told him to run her down and never mind about drowning all the hands. If the £30 had been given him on the Friday nothing would have been said about it; now, he said, his price was a hundred quid.

Mr. Smethurst told him to come to him again at 3 o'clock that afternoon and he would give him his answer, and immediately went off to a firm of solicitors of high repute and asked them to arrange for Walter Rumbell's arrest, on a charge of attempted blackmail, when he kept the afternoon appointment.

They advised against this step, and he consented somewhat reluctantly to a warning letter being written. Their letter, sent to Walter Rumbell at once, said 'The appointment was only made by Mr. Smethurst in order to be advised, and in the hope that we should arrange your immediate arrest at such interview.' And he was warned that action would be taken at once if the statement were repeated. He did not go to Mr. Smethurst's office again, but went to the one man in Grimsby with whom it was known Mr. Smethurst had quarrelled, and to him he told the story. He went also to Mrs. Burnett and told it to her. She asked whether he would have been satisfied if he had got the £100. 'Oh no,' said he, 'I would have got another hundred afterwards for my sister.'

The next day the story was known to Mr. Hamilton and his solicitors. The fact that an admission of liability was on the file of the legal proceedings prevented an order being obtained for the examination of Harry Rumbell as a witness in the suit, but on Friday, the 16th, Mr. Hamilton and his solicitor went to Lincoln gaol and saw him. He made a long statement, giving with much detail an account of conversations which he alleged he had with Mr. Smethurst at which the arrangement for the sinking of the *Fortuna* had been made. Mr. Hamilton took down on sheets of white paper the statement that he made, and this was copied on blue paper, and Harry Rumbell signed it.

It should be mentioned that a petition for a commutation of the death sentence had been largely signed, and that the Home Secretary's refusal of a reprieve was only received at Lincoln on the morning after this interview. On that day the solicitor went to London with the documents. It was Saturday, and he could do nothing. On the Monday morning he was again at the Home Office, but his plea for a reprieve was unsuccessful, and on the Tuesday morning Rumbell was hanged.

While at Lincoln he had been visited several times by Edward King, the saintly Bishop of Lincoln, and had appeared to him sincerely penitent of his crime. The Bishop received his confession and administered the Holy Sacrament to him on the Tuesday morning, and again just before his execution. Indeed, when the drop fell the Bishop and his chaplain were still within the walls of the prison.

The negotiations for the settlement of the case in the Court of Admiralty had not been quite completed, but on the morning of the execution the defendant's solicitors received a letter accepting the offer of £800 which had been previously declined. The answer to this was a withdrawal of the admission of liability; and three weeks later an order was obtained removing that admission from the file. There was no delay in preparing for trial and the hearing began on March 13, 1894.

Although I had been at the Bar nearly thirty years it was the first case I had ever had in the Court of Admiralty, and I was very glad of the valuable assistance of Sir Walter (now Lord) Phillimore and Mr. Butler Aspinall. For the defendants appeared Sir Frank Lockwood, Q.C., Mr. Aspinall, Q.C., and Mr. F. R. Laing.

I need not describe the course of the trial. Mr. Smethurst was called directly my opening speech concluded, and proved an excellent witness. His evidence was clear; his memory, sharply tested, was found to be accurate; his demeanour was quiet and confident, and some little difficulties which arose with regard to certain entries of payments or receipts which appeared in his books were quite cleared away when the clerks who made them were called to give their testimony.

There was some conflict of evidence as to the value of the *Fortuna*, and as to the condition of the steering gear of the *Ibis*; but these matters had been carefully inquired into by the owners of the *Ibis* immediately after the collision, and by the solicitors for the underwriters directly the action was brought, and it became

clear that they had come to a right conclusion in thinking that the defects, which all admitted to exist, might have caused the accident.

The defendants were of course able to find some expert witnesses who put the value of the *Fortuna* at only a few hundred pounds, but when all the circumstances were considered it was evident that the sinking of the vessel would have been a loss and not a gain to Mr. Smethurst.

The jury naturally found it impossible to believe that a man of his character and position should have become the instigator and accomplice of a crime by which he could obtain no benefit, and which, if not detected as it would probably be, would place him all his life at the mercy of the man he had bribed to commit it. Harry Rumbell when sober would almost certainly blackmail him, and when in drink might any day blurt out the secret.

The most interesting part of the trial was the discussion whether the statement made by Harry Rumbell in Lincoln gaol should be received as evidence.

It was tendered by Sir Frank Lockwood and objected to by me, and after long argument the Judge, acting on a well-established and just and reasonable rule of law, rejected it.

Had it been admitted he must have told the jury in his summing up that the two persons who alone could know the truth upon the issue they had to decide were in absolute and irreconcilable contradiction; one giving evidence on oath in a court of justice, the other speaking in a prison cell, with the knowledge, or at all events the strong belief, that he had but a few days to live. I felt very doubtful whether in such a conflict of evidence the jury would come to an unanimous conclusion.

But there was a yet more important matter involved in this decision.

So far as Harry Rumbell's statement was concerned the jury in fact knew all about it. They had seen Sir Frank Lockwood, with the white paper and blue paper in his hands, cross-examining Mr. Smethurst, and reading from these papers the conversation which he suggested had taken place when Rumbell was suborned to sink the *Fortuna*. And they heard the evidence, to which I objected, but which was, I think improperly, admitted, of the way in which that statement was dictated by Rumbell and taken down by Mr. Hamilton, and then copied and signed.

They could not exclude all this from their minds. But we

knew, although they did not, that a yet more important statement had been made.

When the Bishop of Lincoln paid his last visit to the gaol and received Rumbell's confession and gave him absolution and administered the Holy Sacrament, Rumbell declared that his charge against Mr. Smethurst was true. This declaration was not made under the seal of confession, and the Bishop was in attendance under subpoena outside the Court when the trial of the Admiralty action was proceeding, but the Judge's decision prevented his being called.

I did not then doubt, and I have never doubted, that Mr. Smethurst was innocent of the charge made against him, but I had great anxiety as to the effect on the minds of the jury if they were allowed to hear of this declaration made by Rumbell when all hope of reprieve was gone and he stood in the very presence of death.

Lockwood conducted the case brilliantly. His opening speech was excellent and his cross-examination of Mr. Smethurst was admirable.

The jury did not find it necessary to discuss the case at any length; they came back to Court in ten minutes with a verdict for the plaintiff.

THE WADE MONUMENT.

My uncle Frederick died in the early days of 1915, and so, though he left me his house, a little money and a good many miscellaneous possessions, it was only a few months ago that I was able to examine them or to have any idea of what the latter consisted. I was on the Western Front during the first half of the Great War, and when I recovered from the severe wound which brought me home and it was decreed that I could march no longer, I left the Service and went as an ambulance driver to Palestine. After the armistice I settled with my lame leg and a new-made wife in uncle Frederick's house, where I began, in time, to go through a very wilderness of boxes filled with his private papers.

I had always liked my uncle. He was a tall, spare man who looked like an American—that type of old-fashioned, rather grim American seen in illustrations to New England tales—clean shaven, in semi-clerical black. He always wore the strangely-shaped tall hat of his youth. Where he got these hats from I know not, but they must certainly have been made specially for him. He enjoyed what used to be called 'an elegant leisure,' living out his bachelor life among his books. He wrote voluminously; notes, extracts, comments; though these seemed to produce no result, in that they never saw the light. I used to suppose that they were the outcome of some definite system of thought, but when I came to look at the contents of the boxes, what struck me most was that no plan was distinguishable. He must simply have had a passion for recording. There were no consecutive diaries, nothing but records of things seen, things heard, things remembered. It was the sense of history run wild. What gave them value was the mellow humanity of the mind running through the patchwork.

It is one of these isolated papers that I now give in full, just as it came into my hands; carefully written and with the leisureliness that was in his speech and ways.

* * * * *

I had not long left Oxford in 1876 when I first went to Mintern Brevil. I cannot quite recall what took me there, but I think it was the talk of some casual acquaintance who drew an alluring picture of the quaintness of the small seaside towns on that line of coast stretching between Southampton and Plymouth. Perhaps

it was hardly the neighbourhood that a young man, presumably athirst for life, might be expected to choose as a recreation ground ; but out-of-the-way places have appealed to me always, and I think there is scarcely anything more interesting than to step quietly into some backwater and to let its history and suggestions gradually reveal themselves. It is like descending into an almost dark cave and waiting till the surrounding details come out of their obscurity and the slowly adjusting eye becomes aware of unsuspected objects, crannies, strange stones, footmarks in the sand. The obvious history of a place is accessible to all who desire to know it, but the other, shadowy history, which is the reality of the composite thing, which has brought its coherent parts together, which is, as the root of the flower, hidden in the ground—that is the soul of it all. I did not know this when I was a young man, or rather, I had not formulated the knowledge, but, looking back on myself, I can see that it influenced me.

It was June and I had taken a room in a farm house near the top of the steep hill that runs down to the town. The sea below was blue and glittering like a foreign sea and the houses were clustered in the little bay. That outburst of white flowers which comes with the near approach of midsummer was lighting up bank and hedgerow—white chervil, like lace, white catchfly, ox-eye daisies, and the white burnet rose—all were dazzling in the sunlight. Down the hill above the main part of the town, its western door almost in the street, its eastern wall on the cliff, stood the parish church with a square tower, grey against the expanse of blue as one looked down on it. The sea had encroached and eaten away much of the coast by Mintern Brevil, crawling up as though waiting at the foot of its crumbling ramparts to swallow church and churchyard in the fullness of time.

One evening, strolling by, I turned aside up the steps and entered the porch. The main body of the church looked attractive from the inside, being on a higher plane than the spot on which I stood and so giving a different general impression from that produced by the interior of ordinary places of worship. It appeared to be more old-fashioned than ancient, and a gallery ran round three sides of the building, under which I passed as I emerged from the porch. There were many memorial tablets round the walls and a few large monuments with the usual urns and emblems. I never could resist memorial tablets. Their occasional bits of information and humanity challenge my mind to clothe the recorded names

with personalities, and they raise a whole concourse of sailors lost at sea, soldiers fallen in half-forgotten campaigns, women long widowed, and pompous-sounding lawyers and divines. I have always found a few bare words of detail on a memorial tablet worth volumes anywhere else.

There was a tall marble slab on the wall of the northern aisle which bore an immense amount of lettering, and I went over to see whether there was anything suggestive to be found there. So long was it and so wordy that I had to sit down in a neighbouring pew to read it. It was a perfect example of those records of human hypocrisy which were the delight of the early nineteenth century, and it commemorated a family belonging to the town. I wondered if there were any descendants left alive to be put to the blush every Sunday by its weary and fulsome pomp. Were there *any* to whom the following could commend itself? . . .

‘Sacred to the memory of

THOMAS CORBY WADE, Esquire, Solicitor,

Born at Mintern Brevil, February 24th, 1780.

An affectionate Father and devoted Husband, he fulfilled his private Duties in the same Christian Spirit which actuated his every Public Deed. His strict and honourable probity was the pride of his Fellow Townsmen. His Charities were munificent. To an Upright Character he joined a Suavity of Address which gained him the consideration of all who came in contact with him in his Daily Walk of Life. He contributed largely to every Municipal Scheme which his Enlightened Judgement approved and was untiring in his efforts to ameliorate the condition of the Deserving Poor. He died, the True Example of a Professing and Believing Christian, at his Residence in Avon Street, Oct. 1st, 1841, aged 61 years, regretted by an Afflicted Family and an Inconsolable Public.

Also of

His wife, ELIZA, daughter of the Rev. W. CLARK, Vicar of Cobton, in the county of Dorset. Born June 5th, 1796. Died Aug. 19th, 1835, aged 38 years. A tender wife and mother, bringing up her children in the fear of the Lord and providing a pattern for her neighbours of all that a pious Christian woman should be.

Also of

THOMAS CLARK WADE, M.D., son of the above, whose brilliant intellectual gifts earned universal acclamation and whose practice was one of the largest in the south-west of England. Born March 23rd, 1815. Died esteemed and in full assurance of salvation, May 3rd, 1858, at the age of 43.

Also of

MARY ELIZA. Born Oct. 12th, 1817, who died in Infancy.

Also of

EDWIN, born Dec. 1st, 1818, who by his industry and talents made a large fortune in Jamaica, and died 1858, in pious resignation to his Maker's will, from the results of an accident. Lamented by all who had the privilege of knowing him.'

Then came a gap, and some way further down the stone were these words :

' Alured. Died 1851.'

I rose, exasperated. I could picture this intolerable family, whose only recommendation in my eyes was the fact that almost all its members had died moderately young. I looked with relief on a small brass not far off which bore merely the name and age of an obscure officer who had ended his life on the Gold Coast, dying of yellow fever in the place to which his duty had taken him. What a happy contrast to the tame brood of Wades with their resounding complacent virtues ! The only original thing about the Wade monument was the odd contrast between ' Alured ' and his relations, for his name stood apart from theirs as though unfit to appear in that galaxy of rectitude. Why was he so slighted ? Why was there not so much as a word to give him significance in that welter of words ? I wondered whether he had ' died in infancy,' like ' Mary Eliza,' but the time elapsed between his mother's death and his own forbade the possibility.

I made my way to the western gallery. It was Jacobean, of fine carved wood, and having examined it from below, I ran hurriedly up the stairs, for the light was failing and there was a piece of tapestry on the wall behind the gallery pews that I was curious about. One does not often find tapestry in churches.

I paused for a moment in the front seat. From that position I could see the Wade monument, and I was astonished to notice that a woman was sitting just where I had sat to examine it and was doing the same thing. I was puzzled because I had come up the short stair in a couple of bounds and was certain that the pew was empty when I put my foot on the first step. To reach that spot before I could look down she must have run.

She was a small person, and though I could only see her back, I could guess that she was in distress, for she sat with her head bent forward, and now and again I saw her put her hand up to

her eyes. I quite forgot the tapestry in looking at her. She wore a sort of grey cape trimmed with blue; though I did not know much about the fashion of women's garments I could see that she was dressed like no one I had ever met. All at once she rose and crossed the aisle, showing a small-featured profile and the frilled grey border of the hood or cap she wore. There was something blue on it, too—a rosette or a lappet, or whatever these things are called. To my further astonishment she went up to the Wade monument and stood in front of it; then she put out her hand, and there was just enough light left for me to see that she passed it over a part of the stone with a movement that was almost a caress.

I sat rigid, afraid lest the least sound should disturb her. She went back to her place in the pew, and sank down on her knees, and I knew by her heaving shoulders that she wept, but so silently that not a sob woke the quiet of the empty church—empty but for myself sitting breathless in the gallery. Then she rose and crossed to the centre aisle, without looking up, and passed out by the main door just below the place where I sat.

It was on a Monday that I saw her, and she was a good deal in my mind during that week. Once I thought I had caught her figure disappearing down a side street of Mintern Brevil; once I had a fancied glimpse of her grey cap behind the curtain of a window, though I could not be sure; but when Sunday came I went to the parish church—purposely, not too early—that I might peep through the door at the worshippers in the north aisle. If the seat in which we had both sat were her own, and were she there, I might contrive to get a place near enough to it to see her. I wondered at the time why I was impelled to take so much trouble; I think I am less surprised now.

Prayers had begun as I stood at the door to peer in, and, waiting till the congregation rose from its knees, I had full opportunity for my search. There she was, in the same pew at the end next the aisle, with her grey and blue tippet, sitting upright this time, as though oblivious of all that was going on, quite still. As the Amen produced a general movement, I saw that a verger was observing me from beyond the Wade monument and I stepped quickly forward to get nearer to my goal before he should be upon me to regulate my movements. We met exactly parallel to it, and he took me by the arm.

'Two vacant seats there,' he said, thrusting me towards the pew in which the lady sat.

We were close beside her, and she looked round at me, making no movement to let me pass in. I hesitated.

'Two vacant seats, sir,' repeated the verger, more loudly.

There was only one that I could see, on the other side of the quiet little figure; I was shocked at the man's free and easy manner, for he leaned across her, pointing, stretching his arm just in front of her face. It seemed all the worse to me because I had begun to suspect the odd little woman of not being in her right mind, and I was angry to think that he should so take advantage of her weakness. I made a sort of apologetic bow, and went in, because it seemed the only way to put an end to his impertinence, and because the further occupants of the pew were looking at us intently.

There was a hassock in front of her and her feet were on it. As she did not stir them I stepped over, and, being nervously anxious not to incommode her, laid hold of the ledge where the Prayer-books lay to steady myself, and in so doing dropped my stick.

It fell against her knees, but, instead of sliding down the slope of her skirt, passed straight through it to the floor, as a stone might fall through transparent water. I could see it lying upon the boards, although the grey folds of her dress and the outline of her limbs were between me and it.

I subsided into my place, staggered beyond all power of expression. For some time I was too much bewildered to notice the looks of surprise and censure cast on me by those who stood beyond us; I merely sat on, though all were standing, and the *Jubilate* was ended and the Psalms begun before I had the sense to rise to my feet. I took up a Prayer-book mechanically and turned over the leaves, unable to concentrate my mind on finding the place. My right-hand neighbour pointed it out with a detached disapproval of manner that would have annoyed me had I been capable of feeling anything. I was in the mental condition of a man who has suddenly fallen into the sea and been as suddenly pulled out, who lies on the beach unable to adjust himself to a dry and stationary world. When I had recovered a little I glanced stealthily at the woman on my left, but she appeared to be as solid as anybody else. She inspired no dread in me. My only trouble was the difficulty of keeping my head in her presence. I was young, and therefore acutely

conscious of the attitude of strangers towards me, and I greatly feared to make myself ridiculous.

In time I grew more calm and began to argue with myself. I did not dream—I knew that I was sober and I believed that I was sane; I hardly dared to look directly at her, though I much wished she would turn her head and let me see whether there were traces of the distress of a few days ago. No one else appeared to be interested in her. I wondered why the verger had been so boorish—surely if she frequented the church he would have known her and hesitated to treat her so rudely, lest he should be taken to task by some looker-on who knew her too. Then I recalled his words: ‘*Two vacant seats, sir,*’ and the truth broke on me.

He had not seen her. Presumably it was I, and I only, who was aware of her presence.

I became more and more convinced that this was a fact. Though I could see no difference between the solidity of her face and that of the faces near us, her feet and the lower part of her skirt now seemed hazy to my eyes, shadows beneath which lay the walking-stick I had not dared to recover. My own figure hid them from the people beside me. All that had disturbed these latter was my apparently futile agitation and the clumsiness of my entrance.

It was not until the sermon that my strange neighbour turned towards me, and, looking at me with the appealing gaze of a dumb creature, lifted her arm and pointed to the Wade monument. I made the slightest movement of assent, afraid to give myself prominence, yet unable to resist the troubled eyes. Her act finally confirmed my belief, because, though she had stretched out her arm over the end of the pew, no one had shown a sign of astonishment. She looked middle-aged, not from any lines traced by the years; but from the frilled cap she wore and the prim fashion of her clothes. The eyes that met mine were clear, rather childish, though set in a woman’s face and full of a dumb anxiety that was very pitiful. I raised my brows as if to ask a question and waited, wondering if she would understand. She nodded, pointing to an open hymn-book lying before me. I slid it along the ledge to her, but she shook her head and signed to me that I should lay it upon my knee. When I had done this she drew close to me, so close that the end of her tippet lay across my cuff; though I felt no touch, no warmth from the face so near my own as she took a

gold-headed pin from the fastening of her dress and indicated letters, one after another, in the printed page. Then she paused, scanning my face, whilst I read the word they formed. It was A-l-u-r-e-d.

It is almost impossible to describe the state of mind into which those three syllables threw me. To say that I was bewildered is to say nothing; but the sense of something compelling and inevitable—of having known all the time in some recess of my being that I was concerned with the name of this man—was so strong that self-consciousness fled and I forgot everybody in the church but the one who, so to speak, was not there. I took out my pocket-book and wrote down the six letters whilst the anxious eyes near my shoulder followed every line. The gold-headed pin was still till my pencil should stop. Then, when I looked round for further guidance, the face and the tippeted figure had faded into nothingness and only the pin was visible against the page of the hymn-book, pointing to the letters which followed. A-v-o-n S-t-r-e-e-t s-e-a-r-c-h. I had just time to write them when it ceased and was gone.

Through the rest of the sermon I sat without hearing a word. The place beside me was empty, and I was left with a maddening curiosity and the fear lest I should never be able to gratify it. I put away my pocket-book.

As I walked home I decided that I would not look at it again till next day. 'If this is really an illusion,' I said to myself, 'I shall find to-morrow that there is nothing written here.'

I went out into the fields that afternoon, and, lying under a clump of bushes, turned the experience of the morning over and over. There was trouble about this man, Alured, though he was dead; that was plain enough, and I began to piece together the scraps that had been committed to me and to compare them with what I could recall of the words on the monument. 'Avon Street' was suggestive, for the inscription said that Alured's father had died at 'his residence' there. It was there, evidently, that 'search' should be made. I wondered whether the house was still standing. There was nothing to be done to-day, Sunday, for all the shops were closed and I had no acquaintance from whom I could seek information. True, there was my landlady; but when I made inquiry of her that evening it profited me nothing, for I was confronted with that dreadful obstacle, the blank wall of the purely domestic mind.

Next day I went down to Mintern Brevil. One subject had driven all others from my mind. I had lain awake half the night. My idea was to question the tradesmen and innkeepers, to tap that stream of gossip and reminiscence which flows under the life of all small towns. I did not know Avon Street, but I was curious to see the 'residence' of the Wades; it was no detective spirit which urged me, but my own sense of romance—strong in those days—and the fantastic hope of doing some possible service, palliating some undiscovered grief. I do not think I was a superstitious young man, and had I been so, superstition could hardly be said to enter into the case. I was not concerned with superstition, one way or another. I had merely seen a strange thing, as I might have seen an elopement or a street accident, and I wanted to know all that might be known about it. It seemed no part of my duty to persuade myself that it had not happened.

I had just passed the church when I cursed myself for a fool. Why not go in? Why not go back to the same place? Why not take up the hymn-book and see whether the anxious figure would appear at my side and join again the thread which had broken so quickly? The door was open, the place empty, and in I went.

I sat down and took up the book, and to make the parallel complete, sought for the same place in it. I had forgotten the page and had to turn up the first line of the hymn in the index. When I had done so I looked up and saw the little woman standing beside the Wade monument. I cannot say that I *saw* her come towards me, for the next thing I was aware of was her presence at my side and her hand holding the gold-headed pin.

This time I was less taken aback and more able to think for myself, so I brought out my pocket-book and, laying it beside the other on my knee, I wrote 'which house?' after the 'Avon Street' I had already traced there.

The pin moved as it had done before.

'A t-r-e-e.'

'Am I to search the tree?' I wrote.

'S-e-a-r-c-h t-h-e l-a-d-d-e-r'-r-o-o-m d-o t-h-i-s f-o-r A-l-u-r-e-d.'

'I will,' I wrote; but I broke off, for the pin was running on again.

'B-e-h-i-n-d t-h-e d-i-a-m-o-n-d-s f-o-r p-i-t-y-s s-a-k-e f-o-r p-o-o-r A-l-u-r-e-d.'

'But what am I to look for?'

As I wrote this question—the crux of all—and waited for the expected answer, the pin was gone.

I left the church and went straight to Avon Street, directed by a passing workman, and embarked on the preliminaries of a search for something the very nature of which I did not know. I had written 'I will' on the impulse of the moment, but I felt bound at least to try to make good my word. It might be an awkward task, but it was too late to think of that, for, wild goose chase or no, I was committed to it.

Avon Street was a quiet, remote place, not properly a street at all, but a row of detached houses far back from the sea and approached by a modest alley from the main thoroughfare. Only one true seaside touch had cropped up in two or three of these, and that was the faded-looking green verandah with a sloping tin roof which seems to belong particularly to the south coast of England. Each had a small patch of garden railed in from the pavement, and I saw with interest that there was but one tree in the place, a large araucaria, luxuriantly grown, whose thin sombre arms shadowed the dead-looking windows by the door of the most old-fashioned of all. I had so far returned to a normal frame of mind that I smiled to think of my question of whether I should search the tree. I could not imagine how anyone would proceed who had to search a 'monkey-puzzle.'

If this house was the Wade house there would seem to be real meaning in the directions of the woman in the church, and I opened the iron gate and approached the door; I was not prepared to confront any remaining member of the family who might be within and to state my extraordinary errand, so I had no choice but to ask for a fictitious person and to hope that the act might elicit the name of the owner.

'Is Mr. Jerningham at home?' I inquired, taking the first moderately uncommon name I could think of.

The thin-lipped woman who answered the bell eyed me resentfully.

'This is Miss Wade's house,' she said, 'we have no gentlemen here.'

She watched me departing, unmollified by my apology. I could feel her eyes on my back as I unlatched the iron gate.

It had been an easy thing to identify the 'residence,' but the next step—to get into it—would be a very different matter, and I felt a good deal discouraged. The keeper of the door seemed

to look on me as an impostor (she little knew with what reason), and I could imagine that the dweller behind it, were I ever to reach her presence with my story, would take me for some wandering madman. A spinster—a member of that family described on the monument—what hope had I of being listened to by such a person! I went down to the shore and sat on the sea-wall to take council with myself what my next step should be.

I did not know much about the clergy. My father was at the bar and had no clerical friends. But when I came to consider which individual in a community would be most accessible to a stranger, I could only think of the parson. The longing to halve the burden of my experience was great, and I also reflected that, their family monument being set up in the parish church, the surviving Wades would probably belong to its congregation. I had not the vaguest remembrance of the last Sunday's preacher, for I had had other things to think of. However, I could come to no better conclusion and I made up my mind to appeal to him. But I would put it off till to-morrow; it would take me till then to screw up my courage.

Next day, cold with the dread of making a fool of myself to no purpose, I was ushered into a vicarage study where a pale, plain-looking little man rose to receive me. There was nothing remarkable about him but a crooked smile that gave character to his face. He asked me very civilly what he could do for me.

The knowledge of my position engulfed me as a wave engulfs a pebble of the shore. I was tongue-tied. Everything in the room was solid and spoke so loudly of settled habits, of daily duties, and all reasonable and accepted things that, in my acute consciousness of the fantastic nature of what I had come to say, my heart died within me. Here was the recognised exponent of spiritual things and here was I with this moonshine tale of the unseen upon my lips. I felt like a child with a tin sword before a general.

He was misled by my bearing, for it was plain that he suspected some young man's scrape, some difficulty which youth might sooner disclose to a stranger than to a parent. He gave me a little time to collect myself and then said with his crooked smile:

'You need not hesitate to tell me anything. What am I here for but to listen? If you speak plainly to me I will speak plainly to you—that is all.'

So I began. I told it to him baldly and consecutively, from

the beginning, when I stood idly before the Wade monument, to the end, when I turned my back on the house with the araucaria.

When I had finished, he got up and stood by the mantel-piece.

'And this is *absolutely* true?' he said at last; 'upon your honour, this is true?'

'Sir,' I exclaimed, 'can you suppose that I should put myself in this position for a childish invention? The risk of being taken for a liar is no advantage.'

'I beg your pardon,' said he.

'It is true, upon my honour.'

He sat down again and we were both silent for a little while.

'What do you make of it, sir?' I inquired at last.

'I don't know what to make of it.'

'And what ought I to do?'

He was looking at the floor and he raised his eyes to mine.

'You said you wrote "I will," did you not, when she told you to search?'

'Yes.'

'Then you must do it.'

'You think there is something in it, then?' I exclaimed, catching at his support.

'I tell you I don't know what to think; but I am certain that we should keep our promises.'

I nodded.

'Do you know anything of the family?' I asked; 'I came here, hoping you might give me some help in finding them.'

'Miss Emily Wade is the last one left now,' he replied, 'but, though she is my parishioner, I can hardly say that I know her. The one I *can* tell you about is Alured Wade, though he has been dead these five and twenty years. It is owing to him that they left Mintern Brevil. The house was let at one time, but afterwards it stood empty till Miss Wade came back a couple of years ago. She sees nobody and goes nowhere, not even to church.'

'But why is it owing to Alured?' I broke in.

'He was in a solicitor's office, and he made away with a large sum of money and died in prison. That is why they left the town and why she lives as she does. She had brought Alured up, for she was ten years older than he when they were left motherless. He died at twenty, poor wretched lad. I have only been here a few years, so I never saw him.'

'There was something about diamonds too,' said I. 'It is written down in my pocket-book.'

'I can't imagine what that can be. I have never heard anything about that.'

'Well,' said I, ruefully, 'I must do my best, as you say, but how to approach Miss Wade I don't know, for it seems she is even more unapproachable than I suspected. If I write to her is there any chance that she will consent to see me? Is it too much to ask you to give me a word of introduction? I am really no impostor, but you do not know how I dread it.'

'You are no coward, young man, all the same.'

'I will try not to be,' said I.

'Well,' he went on, 'you have no right to hang back, neither have I. I will go to Miss Wade, not because I think I can influence her to listen to you, but because she may think it less of an intrusion from one of my calling than from any other man. Go home now and wait till you hear from me.'

I got up.

'I can never thank you enough, sir,' I said.

'Wait to thank me till we have succeeded,' he replied, smiling crookedly.

For two days after this conversation I dreaded the postman. I did not know which would make me more uncomfortable, a summons to Avon Street or the news that nothing further could be done; but on the third day I received a letter from the parson.

'... I have had a difficult business,' he wrote, 'and for some time I had little hope of success, but at last I have got Miss Wade's consent to see you and now I can only leave you to do your best. I told you that you were no coward, but I now add that you may possibly become one when you meet Miss Wade. Do not take this as discouragement, but as warning, and remember, if I may venture to advise you, that there is nothing like keeping one's temper in all circumstances. I hope you will let me hear whether any new light is thrown on this strange subject. . . .'

* * * * *

At an appointed hour I stood once more on the threshold of the house with the araucaria, and this time was grudgingly admitted and taken across a small, dingy hall to a sitting-room on the ground floor. There was no one in it, and I had been waiting fully ten minutes when Miss Emily Wade entered.

I had no nerve consciously to observe the woman herself, but only to feel the effect she produced on me; though now, after the lapse of years, I can describe her in detail. At a little distance she appeared to be the embodiment of commonplace middle age, but as she advanced with a stiff bow, which was the mere drawing-in of her chin, and desired me to be seated, I saw my mistake. She was slow and cumbrous and her large face, almost pear-shaped, sallow and very smooth in its outlines, reminded me of something Asiatic. Though she was so large, you would not call her fat, for the softness suggested by that word was absent. She had the heavy thickness of something stuffed tightly with sawdust, and she wore a muslin cap with a velvet bow, the recognised head-dress of all well-to-do elderly women at that date. Her hair, showing no thread of grey, was parted smoothly. I think she had the smallest mouth I ever saw and the depth of her chin made it look as though set too high in her face. Her straight, heavy nose seemed to start too soon from between her brows. I have never known the colour of her eyes, for their opaqueness was all that I could realise. She sat down without a word and waited for me to begin. There was not enough expression in her face to show hostility, but I felt it emanating from her.

How I embarked on my story I cannot remember. I heard myself speaking as though I were listening to another person, and the opaque, secretive eyes never left my face. I will do her the justice to say that she did not once try to interrupt me. When I had finished, a sense of ineptness and anticlimax and futility enfolded me like a choking mist.

‘And why have you brought me this tale?’ she inquired, a sneer touching her lip.

‘I considered myself bound to do so.’

‘Indeed,’ she said, slowly, ‘and what do you expect to gain by it?’

‘A clear conscience.’

She looked disconcerted, I suppose, by the directness of my answer. It was the first indication of any kind of feeling that I had seen since she entered.

I do not know what happy intuition spurred me to thrust her up against the matter in question before she had recovered her balance. Her strength was to sit still and so, no doubt, instinct impelled me to keep her moving.

‘I see that I have put you into an awkward position,’ I said.

'Not in the least, I assure you!' she exclaimed, a slight flush rising to her forehead.

It was evident to me that the very thought of herself in such a plight was intolerable to her.

'I am truly sorry to have upset you,' I continued, 'but I can well imagine that my intrusion is annoying. I——'

'You misunderstand me,' she broke in. 'I am entirely indifferent. Be sure of that.'

'But it is very natural. Believe me, I have every sympathy with you, and I can only apologise, placed as I am. Perhaps you would like me to go?'

I half rose from my seat. It was a rash thing to do, for had she said 'Yes' I should have had no choice but to depart. Despite the parson's advice I had let my irritation get the better of me in an overwhelming desire to shake her sullen insolence and the vanity which made her see herself as unassailable, imperturbable at all points. It was something inert and unenterprising in her that alone prevented her from dismissing a person who shook, even for a moment, her placid experience. Effort was her horror. I could guess that.

I think she would willingly have strangled me. Stupid though I believe she was, she had an uneasy feeling that I had made it difficult for her to dismiss me with dignity.

But her temper was suffering, as well as mine.

'I told the Vicar that I would see you and hear your—your—what you wanted to say—and I have done it. What do you want? Let us get through with it quickly,' she exclaimed, angrily.

'Will you allow me to see the ladder-room, if there is such a place?' I asked, my own anger cooling as the prospect bettered itself.

'It is empty. There is nothing there.'

'Then there is a room called the ladder-room!' I exclaimed. 'Miss Wade—do, pray allow me to see it! Let your maid take me there. I will not ask you to go with me.'

'I will certainly go with you,' she replied.

It was no civility which prompted her words; her look made their meaning plain. It said 'Do you suppose I should trust you out of my sight?'

But the desire to be disagreeable had betrayed her; it had gained me my point. She rose, and I opened the door and followed her out.

We went slowly up the dark stairs of the musty little house; it had three storeys and at each landing she stopped, breathing heavily, that I might understand the infinite inconvenience I was causing her. This made me very uncomfortable as a man. As a human being I cared nothing.

When we reached the top floor I found myself facing a ladder of about four rungs with a hand-rail at one side; it led to a door which looked as if it had not been painted for half a century.

'Go on,' said Miss Wade.

I went up and thrust the door open; it needed a strong push and I almost stumbled into a small attic room, papered and with a dormer window in the sloping roof letting in the afternoon light. My companion came heavily after me. It was perfectly empty, but for three objects: a deal table in the recess of the window, a tiny, dusty picture hanging on a nail, and an unused bookshelf fastened on the wall. There was not so much as a fireplace.

Miss Wade stood looking at me with sullen triumph in her opaque eyes. Her mouth was pinched to a small line above the long bulk of her chin. I felt very foolish.

'And was this always known as the ladder-room?' I asked.

She assented.

In spite of the fact that the gold-headed pin had, so far, pointed to nothing but the truth, I could only stare round on the unpromising place, humiliated by the ineffectual figure I cut. There was not even a drawer in the table that I might open. I went to the wall and peered at the little faintly-coloured daguerreotype in its frame that seemed cut out of black tin.

Then I started back and turned to Miss Wade. I suppose that triumph must have loosened her tongue, for the first words she had yet volunteered came from her pursed lips.

'My mother,' she said, shortly.

I should have known the portrait, even without the grey cap and the tippet with blue trimming.

'That is the lady I saw in the church,' I said.

I could not bring myself to ask Miss Wade whether this wretched attic had been Alured's room, but I felt sure of it. I did not know if she had learned from the Vicar that he had told me the boy's history and, in any case, I did not want to hear his name on her lips. The sight of the daguerreotype stirred an overwhelming pity in me. That was Alured's mother, the mother who had been

replaced, for him, by the heavy, sordid woman in the doorway; I could imagine what such a change must have meant to the little boy who had slept in this fireless room. He had been 'brought up' by her, been completely in her power; she had dealt out his punishments and held him, as grown-up people hold children, in the hollow of her hand. Here he had lived, the only young thing in the house, through his motherless years, only to die in prison at last. I thought of the desolating tears of my own happy childhood—rare, indeed, with me, but, probably, not rare with him. I could see him here, alone with his griefs and misunderstandings and hidden disappointments, under the attic roof, perhaps looking at the daguerreotype through wet eyelashes and knowing that his sins and fears and all the thousand, thousand childish secrets and dreads must be locked into his lonely heart because the face in the frame was only a face in a frame, and no more. I longed to be out of the house, anywhere away from Miss Wade. She was immeasurably more hateful to me now that I had seen this picture in this place.

'There are no diamonds here, after all, you see,' she said.

As she spoke my eyes were on the bookcase. Perhaps, if she had not made that derisive speech, we should have left the miserable room no wiser than we came, but at the word 'diamonds' I sprang forward, for light flashed into my mind. On the wall behind the empty bookshelves a piece of chintz was nailed to keep the books from rubbing it; it was a hideous thing, grimy and faded; blue, with a yellow diamond pattern covering its dismal expanse.

'Yes, there are,' I cried, laying my palm against it, '*these* are the diamonds!'

There was a rent in the stuff where it was crossed by the middle shelf, but I could not get my hand into it because the horizontal board was set in so close to the wall. At the lower edge of the chintz a row of nails stretched it tight, and just above these I could feel a thin, square object lying as though in a pocket. Without further ado I got my thumb in between two of the nails and ripped up the rotten stuff. It tore at a touch and a slim paper packet fell out and dropped on the floor.

Miss Wade said nothing; anger and surprise devoured her. I could tell that her wrath was raised, not by my summary dealing with her furniture, but by the proof, now lying at my feet, that there had really been something to find and that I had found it. I picked up the packet and handed it to her.

'Thanks,' she said, putting it into her pocket. 'Now we will go downstairs.'

Although there was the handrail, she had to turn and step backwards down the ladder. At any other time I should have laughed inwardly at the mixture of displeasure and physical discomfort on the large, white face. But I did not laugh now. I had reached the goal towards which my whole mind had strained for nearly a week; I had started on such a strange quest as few had ever undertaken; and now, what I suspected was the key of it all had passed into the hands of this repellent creature! In my folly I had not foreseen this very obvious climax, but I now saw it written on the pursed-up mouth and secretive eyes that would not meet my own. *I should hear nothing more*; I could not protest; I could do nothing but submit. She had turned the tables on me after all.

She stopped in the hall outside the sitting-room door, her hand on the door-knob, and made the same stiff bow with which she had received me. There was nothing for it but to take up my hat and go.

I was furious as I went up the street, outraged in every feeling. The consistent rudeness I had met with made my blood boil. Being very young, I marvelled that, in a civilised world, the attempt to do what was right—at some cost to myself, too—should bring me nothing but malice; and beyond that, baffled curiosity wept lamentably in my breast. It was cruel, abominable, that I should be debarred from knowing whether my thankless labours had been of any use to anyone, alive or dead.

* * * * *

I had lost all interest in Mintern Brevil. I was not such a fool as to imagine that Miss Wade would send me any information, and it seemed that the best thing I could do was to depart next day and try to forget the whole business. While I was packing, the Vicar walked up to the farm and asked me to spend a few days with him. I was immensely flattered, for I liked him, and shouldering my small portmanteau I accompanied him home.

We were at breakfast on the following morning when the post came in. I had no correspondence, but he had a good deal, and, when he had turned over his pile of letters, he opened one and became so much absorbed in it that he stopped eating. I went on steadily. At last he looked up.

'This is your affair, too,' he said.

There had been three enclosures in the envelope and he threw one of them across to me.

'DEAR MR. WILLIAMS,' I read, 'The person you spoke of to me called at my house the day before yesterday and insisted upon my climbing with him to the attic. While we were there a packet dropped from behind a bookshelf. I think the information which it contained should be made public, and as I do not want to be annoyed by inquisitive people, I will ask you to do so by mentioning it, when opportunity occurs, to your parishioners. In order that you may speak with authority I enclose these two letters which I shall be obliged if you will return. Meanwhile, I will consider what other steps should be taken.

'Yours truly,
'Emily Wade.'

'And now read this,' said the Vicar, after I had finished. I took the yellow, discoloured paper and smoothed it out.

'October 12, 1850.

'DEAR NED,—I have not had a moment's ease since our conversation after we left the office yesterday, for I can think of nothing but the terrible story you told me. You know what I feel. My friendship for you must give you full assurance of that, and the remorse you expressed as we walked home together will not be aggravated by any reproach from me. What is weighing on you is weighing on me too. Think of your mother lying there; we know from the doctor that she has only a few months to live—if that. What will it be to her? I am convinced, *determined*, that nothing must be left undone to spare her the knowledge that would prevent her from dying in peace. This is my proposal, the plan I have thought out. I am going to take the theft upon myself. We must leave the matter alone till it is discovered; that will gain time, possibly much time, and I will then confess it, holding you bound to be silent. Ned, think of your mother. Remember that I am tied by none of the considerations that tie you. My father is dead ten years ago, my mother I can only vaguely remember; all I know of her is the picture in my room. My elder brothers are prosperous men who can take care of themselves. You know my sister. You, who have known me since we were both children, will understand what I need not say. Your mother's goodness and love to me when I most needed it is all I am thinking of now. I am not thinking of you. I am thinking

of her. It is Sunday and my sister is at church, so I have had leisure to consider, and my mind is made up.

'If you agree, *as you must do*, I will require you to do two things. You must write me a letter accepting the proposal I have made and giving me your word that as soon as your mother is dead you will acknowledge the truth. I will make a copy of this letter that I am now writing and seal it up with yours in a packet. It will be put in a place that only you and I will know of, and as soon as possible after your mother's funeral, you will carry it to a person whom we shall both select and who will know how to use it for my release.

'We do not know how soon the discovery of what you have done may be made, so whatever we settle must be settled at once in all its details. I shall see you to-morrow at the office and we must walk home together. But before we meet I must tell you again, lest you should have any hesitation in agreeing, that *I am doing it for her*.

'Your sincere friend,

'ALURED WADE.'

The Vicar pushed the other paper towards me. It was dated two days after the foregoing letter. The writer had not taken long in making up his mind.

'I accept all the conditions of Alured Wade's letter of Oct. 12, 1850,' it ran, 'and I hereby faithfully promise that, on my mother's decease, I will do as desired by him with the two letters, using every endeavour to clear his name by means of them and by admitting the fraud which I have committed and for which he, for the reasons he states, has taken the blame.'

'EDWARD GROVES STEPHENSON.'

'Poor lad,' said the Vicar, 'poor little lad.'

His words took me back to the attic room with the little boy I had pictured alone in it. I was glad, more glad than I could say, to know that someone had befriended him; the measure of his gratitude showed me, like lamplight, how dark the dark places must have been to him. How glad I was that I had bearded that heavy woman with the opaque eyes and the velvet bow in her cap! It rather awed me to think that I had been the means of disinterring that obscure and unrecognised sacrifice. For the moment I had forgotten the woman in the church, but she returned to my mind, bringing with her a mist of speculation in which I lost myself.

The Vicar's voice broke through it.

'There is another piece that fits into the story,' he said. 'I know the name of Ned Stephenson well. He disappeared very suddenly from Mintern Brevil, years before I came here; it was supposed, to America. In any case he was never heard of again. I wonder did his mother cheat the doctor and outlive Alured, and was his baseness a crime against his fellow-clerk, or against his fellow-clerk's memory? Did he break his word to a dead man or to a live one? There is nothing on the monument to tell how far into 1851 Alured lived; but he must have died without speaking.'

'And I wonder,' said I, 'whether the packet fell down behind the chintz and was lost, or whether it was hidden there purposely till the time should come to produce it?'

'It must have been hidden,' said he, reflectively. 'If Alured had lost it, he would certainly have written another letter and made Ned write another statement, and if Ned had lost it, it would hardly have been found in the Wades' house. Had the real culprit made any attempt to tell the truth I should have heard of it when I first heard the story of Alured's crime. It is easy to guess why he disappeared.'

'And the woman in the church?'

'We know nothing about anything,' said he, 'and I suppose Solomon himself was in the like position. But he said some notable things, all the same—"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."'

'Do you imagine that Miss Wade will add anything to the monument?' I asked, after a pause. 'She ought to do him that much justice.'

'Ah,' he said, 'I fancy that, whatever she does, her resentment will never be disturbed by a little thing like the truth. He brought discredit on her and she will never forgive him, as she will never forgive you for bringing back the memory of it.'

'But that's unreasonable!' I exclaimed, 'the disgrace is gone.'

'Think what the Wade respectability has suffered—no, she will never forgive him. To her he is a criminal still. Personally, I should like to give him a monument to himself.'

'What would you put on it?' I asked.

'Alured Wade. Saint and Martyr.'

VIOLET JACOB.

BELOW THE WEDGE.

BY W. H. F. BASEVI.

To begin an essay with a quotation from the writings of Henry George is enough in itself to provoke opposition or at least to inspire mistrust. As a writer on economics, though he enjoyed a transient popularity, he has long since fallen into disrepute; for, courageous and independent thinker as undoubtedly he was, he had one great failing—he stopped thinking too soon. But even a discredited philosopher may sometimes hit upon the truth, and this is more likely to occur when it is a matter of observation and not of reasoning. His statement, in the Introduction to 'Progress and Poverty' of the effect of modern progress upon the condition of the poorer classes is a vivid description of observed facts and, as such, may serve us for a text.

'The tendency,' he says, 'of what we call material progress is in nowise to improve the condition of the lowest class in the essentials of healthy, happy human life. Nay, more, it is to still further depress the condition of the lowest class. The new forces, elevating in their nature though they be, do not act upon the social fabric from underneath, as was for a long time hoped and believed, but strike it at a point intermediate between top and bottom. It is as though an immense wedge were being forced, not underneath society, but through society. Those who are above the point of separation are elevated, but those who are below are crushed down.'

The metaphor of the wedge is striking, original, and true; but lest there be any whose contempt for his opinions incline them to suspect his facts it may be well to call other witnesses in support. Many authorities endorse his views by implication, and some of these will be mentioned later: 'meanwhile we may be content with two quotations from sources which cannot be suspected of contamination by his ideas. Thomas Henry Huxley, who held up Henry George's theories to derision, admits the fact:

'Anyone who is acquainted with the state of population of all great industrial centres, whether in this or other countries, is aware that, amidst a large and increasing body of that population, *la misère* reigns supreme.' ('Evolution and Ethics,' ch. v. p. 215.)

Again, in the majority report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws occurs the following statement :

‘The great majority of witnesses were of opinion that the general material condition of the skilled workman had improved during the last few decades. As regards the higher grade of unskilled the same opinion was expressed, though not so confidently nor uniformly. As regards the lower grades of unskilled labourers, many witnesses, especially some from London and the crowded industrial centres, were of opinion that the position of such labourers was worse than formerly.’ (Vol. i. p. 461, para. 312.)

The evidence appears to be sufficient ; but even assuming that all these witnesses have been subject to a kind of optical illusion, and that the widening gap between the condition of the upper and lower grades of labour is due solely to the uplifting of the former while the latter have remained stationary—even so we are faced with a phenomenon strange enough, and quite disconcerting to those who based their hopes and prophecies of a happier world on the material results of progress. The gain has been confined to certain sections of the population, while an unfortunate and perhaps increasing remnant have remained unaffected, if indeed they have not lost ground. One object of this paper is to offer an explanation of this unforeseen development. The problem is of the deepest concern to the whole civilised world, not only because the existence and increase of a multitude hopelessly depressed endangers the stability of all nations ; not only because misery and stagnation side by side with wealth and progress are shocking to our sense of right and wrong ; but also, and more so, because, owing to a complete misapprehension of the problem, the upper ranks of Labour have added to their difficulties, already great enough, by linking their future with those of their less fortunate neighbours. What society has failed to do Labour has taken in hand, and though the motives are most honourable the result may lead to ruin. For Labour will fail where society has failed, and for the same reason ; while Labour alone is far less able to bear the burden. The reason for the failure hitherto is that the problem has been investigated solely by the uncertain light of economics, whereas the causes are for the most part anthropological. Until this fact is grasped there is no hope of betterment.

It has become almost habitual in these days to write labour

with a capital L, and speak of it as one homogeneous mass, regardless of the fact that manual workers, like any other collection of men, vary in habits, qualities, and aptitudes; but for the purpose of our investigation it is essential to segregate mentally the section of the populace with whom we are dealing. In doing so we must bear in mind that this isolation is purely academic, adopted merely to simplify the problem, and largely impossible in practical affairs. A phrase taken from the Report on the Poor Laws will serve to indicate what is required :

‘Many, we fear, owing to want of original capacity and want of early training, must always fall into the intermittent and ill-paid occupations’ (ii. 108).

Here we find two classes : some who are deficient in original capacity, others who suffer from want of early training. Although the sufferings of both classes may be equal in degree, and either may at any given time preponderate in numbers; although in the eyes of the legislator and administrator the alleviation of both, simultaneously and indiscriminately, may appear necessary; and although the individuals of each class are so mixed together, engaged in the same occupations, living in the same street, outwardly indistinguishable one from another, and therefore difficult to separate in practice—yet for our present purpose it is essential that they should not be confused. Only those who are described as wanting in original capacity are the objects of this investigation. It adds to our difficulties that no hard-and-fast line can be drawn between them : as with the rest of society, one class merges into the other. But that is no reason why, for the purpose of abstract inquiry, we should not take typical examples to represent the class; and this is not difficult. Mr. Rowntree, in Chapter V. of his classic work, ‘Poverty,’ when discussing chronic unemployment, speaks of the ‘incapacity or unwillingness of the worker to undertake regular employment’; and again, in the same chapter, he goes on to say :

‘It is probable that not a few of the wage-earners in this section would be unfitted for, or unwilling to undertake, any regular work, even if it were offered to them.’

Ample evidence and opinion will be found in the Poor Law Report to confirm his view. It mentions, for example, those ‘who do not mind a short spell of hard work, but will not plod

through a task all the year round' (ii. 39); and, again, speaks of 'inefficiency and inability for anything but unskilled and non-continuous work of the most elementary kind' (i. 463). But there is no need to pile Ossa upon Pelion. These facts are well established.

Witnesses, with whom the members of the Poor Law Commission appear to concur, attribute the condition of this unhappy class, with some want of precision but with a general appreciation of the truth, to moral and hereditary causes. 'It is generally agreed that the causes of poverty are more moral, and social, and hereditary than economic' (ii. 38); and again, 'the poverty that does exist is due to moral and not to economic causes' (ii. 40). Here again we must eliminate the social causes, and confine ourselves to those that are hereditary. The expression 'moral causes' offers some difficulty owing to its ambiguity, but it is a legitimate assumption that some of them are a matter of heredity, due, that is to say, to some defect in the man himself and not to his environment. That the expression may be interpreted in this sense is evident from other instances. For example, when describing a class who fail to get employment even when trade is good, it is said:

'They seem to be men for whom, in our present high-pressure industrial system, there is no place; sometimes they are able-bodied, sometimes they are comparatively young, but they do not seem to be quite suitable for any work on which one can lay one's finger' (i. 436).

It is this type, and variants of this type, with which we are concerned.

Having approximately defined the type the next step is to ascertain the cause of its existence. The witness last quoted went on to say 'It seems to me that the existence of this class is undeniable, new, and serious.' Here he is wrong. The type is not new. It is not the men who are changing but the conditions. Ample evidence exists in the Poor Law Report to substantiate this. It refers to men 'not up to the standard required by the industries which they wish to enter or remain in' (i. 433). In reference to unemployables it says:

'The word, unfortunately, has obtained a large extension of late years. It has come to mean not only the imbecile, the drunkard,

the impotent, but also the person who cannot conform to the requirements of a highly artificial and exacting system of industry' (i. 433).

'The present organisation of industry, with its excessive specialisation and universal application of machinery, has raised the standard of work required from the ordinary operative' (ii. 108).

'It seems to have come about that, while the total demand for labour is probably increasing, it may be demand for the kind of labour that the average man is not able to supply' (i. 434).

'The evolution of industry has necessitated the perfecting of all the tools of production, and this tendency has had full play as regards machinery . . . while, all the time, there are many circumstances, social and otherwise, which have prevented the human instrument of production from being brought to the same point of perfection' (i. 435).

'If we compare, for instance, the demands made on the average worker by the complex machine industry of to-day with the demands made on him in 1834 when the great employment was agriculture, and when agriculture was at a comparatively low level, it seems easy to understand how it comes that, in every occupation, while there is room enough at the top, there is always a surplus at the bottom' (i. 436).

These extracts, though without any such intention, unite to endorse the opinion of Thomas Henry Huxley:

'There can be no doubt that vast changes have taken place in English civilisation since the reign of the Tudors. But I am not aware of a particle of evidence in favour of the conclusion that this evolutionary process has been accompanied by any modification of the physical, or the mental, characters of the men who have been the subjects of it.' ('Evolution and Ethics,' p. 37.)

Anthropological research in recent times has vastly extended the narrow limits to which Huxley cautiously restricted himself; but even in his day Herbert Spencer took a wider view:

'All evil results from the non-adaptation of constitution to conditions. . . . But why is man not adapted to the social state? Simply because he yet partially retains the characteristics that adapted him for an antecedent state. The respects in which he is not fitted to society are the respects in which he is fitted for his original predatory life.' ('Social Statics,' ii. 77.)

Herbert Spencer is discussing a problem of morality, and the

chapter heading is 'The Evanescence of Evil'; but *mutatis mutandis* the words apply to our problem.

The sum of all these opinions amounts to this: progress has been so rapid that a section of the populace has been outpaced. Progress, therefore, has not helped them, for they are incapable of using it to their advantage; and, like the footsore stragglers of an army, they are left sitting by the road-side. This doubtless has occurred in all grades of society, but it is among the poor that it is most noticeable. It is among the poor also that public action is most imperatively called for; but this action will do more harm than good if it continues to treat all alike as though the troubles of all were due to social and economic causes. Harm enough has arisen from this mistake, and still more will come if Labour thinks that loyalty and honour call on it to step short with the unfit. It is one thing to help lame dogs over stiles, but quite another matter to keep the whole pack back with them. This is to injure the great majority in a degree quite out of proportion to the benefits conferred. The problem is national, even international; and it is politico-anthropological (if one may coin an expression so uncouth) and not economical. It is true that in the Legion of the Damned are many who have been driven into its ranks by misfortune and not by incapacity. These are, if one may say so, honorary members of the corps and are fitting objects for welfare workers to redeem; while legislation, guided by economists, may do something to prevent their increase. But those whose membership is permanent require different treatment. The stock remedies have proved ineffectual. Neither charity, in its restricted sense, nor education in its widest, nor yet religious teaching, has had, or can have, any large and permanent result, because they do not attack the root of the disease. Where diagnosis is wrong, prognosis and treatment must err, unless they become right through further error. Two wrongs do sometimes make a right if their forces are equal and opposite; but it is unwise to rely on this.

It may justly be contended that certain methods have proved successful in practice, and on Huxley's dictum that 'methods that answer are preceded by thoughts that are true' it might be claimed that the diagnosis must therefore have been right. But, besides ignoring the combined effect of two equal and opposing wrongs, Huxley does not take into account the element of luck. Training-ships, farm colonies, and assisted emigration to agricultural centres have undoubtedly conferred great benefits; but

these and other schemes have not been without their unexplained failures. Where success has come about it has been rather as the result of a process resembling what psychologists call 'trial and error.' Empiricism reigns in this domain, and none but visionaries dispute its sway. These indeed are always with us, to our and their own undoing; for theirs is a land of castles in the air, of aspirations unfulfilled, and dreams that don't come true. There are those who cry for equal distribution of wealth, ignoring the complementary need of equal expenditure. You cannot equalise economy and extravagance. Then there is the call for equal opportunity—a good thing in itself but not a panacea; for it will not help those who are unequal to their opportunities. Of all the mirages by which mankind has been deceived none can compare with the magic word 'equality.' It creates the illusion that every man is six feet high.

The deplorable neglect of science results from faults on both sides. An English doctor travelling in Africa once sought an interview with a Ju-ju man, and inquired about his methods. After these had been disclosed to one who was recognised as a fellow-worker, the African in his turn asked what the European methods were. The doctor explained them as best he could, and at the close of the interview the African exclaimed 'What clever men must you and I be, that we can deceive so many!' This Negro must have been a man of quite exceptional enlightenment, for as a rule the successful deceiver is himself deceived. Those engaged in welfare work are convinced that victory attends their efforts. Undismayed by failure, fortified by each success, they fight a losing battle, refusing to admit that they are beaten, and disdain the help which is at hand. The lay attitude towards science, though not actively hostile, is one of guarded suspicion. It inclines to the old idea that theoretical instruction is instruction which is not practical. On the other side, although scientific bodies do not regard their labours with the cynicism of the Ju-ju man, they do lack faith. They fail to see how a discovery can have any practical result. Nor are they concerned that it should. Practical results are not their aim. Pure science is far too coy. It maintains a fugitive and cloistered virtue unspotted from the world. Its members meet together almost with the secrecy of freemasons, and commune with each other in language so technical as nearly to attain the dignity of a dialect. To bring the discoveries of science to bear on the problems of life requires the

mediation of a special body of men, not scientists themselves, but acquainted with science and in touch with the outside world. Thus mathematics is divided into pure and applied; chemistry has its industrial as well as its purely scientific side; while practising doctors and surgeons furnish the connecting link between suffering humanity and those engaged in research. All branches of physics, in a greater or less degree, have evolved this class whose business it is to apply the knowledge gained by experts. But the 'inexact sciences' (though the last hatched chick, psychology, is peeping from its egg) lag far behind. Whether this is because the Royal Society, whose fellowship is the hall-mark of quality, has become almost a preserve of the exact sciences, and thus by implication brands the rest as inferior, or whether it is due to some other cause, is immaterial. The fact remains that anthropology has no 'profession' attached to it: there are no practising anthropologists. Yet this is the only branch of science¹ capable of assisting in the redemption of those below the wedge.

The scientific view has been presented very vividly by Bagehot:

'Great communities are like great mountains—they have in them the primary, secondary, and tertiary strata of human progress; the characteristics of the lower regions resemble the life of old times rather than the present life of the higher regions. And a philosophy which does not ceaselessly remember, which does not continually obtrude, the palpable differences of the various parts, will be a theory radically false, because it has omitted a capital reality—will be a theory essentially misleading, because it will lead men to expect what does not exist.' ('The English Constitution,' chap. i.)

These words were written more than fifty years ago, but the knowledge gained since then has confirmed their truth. Mr. G. L. Gomme, for example, in the fifth chapter of his 'Ethnology in Folklore,' says substantially the same thing, believing the cause to be ethnological. His theory is, as far as it concerns the British Isles, that the prehistoric inhabitants have never quite died out, but have continued the blood of their race. He directs attention 'to the recent researches which go to prove the late, nay present, existence of descendants of prehistoric non-Aryan peoples in Britain'; and calls philology and physiology in support of the contention that a considerable stock of non-Aryan peoples

¹ Experimental Psychology may evolve tests to determine the classification of individuals.

existed at the dawn of history and 'have never been exterminated as a race.'

'While philology,' he says, 'takes us back to prehistoric non-Aryans, physiology takes us to their modern descendants. May we not then carry on the enquiry a little further, and endeavour to ascertain whether the condition of these modern descendants may not help us to grasp the fact that non-Aryan races are in Britain, as in India, a living factor to be reckoned with in discussing the problem of origins?'

And again, 'Non-Aryan races have brought down survivals of savage culture in our folklore, and this has not been accomplished without other marks of their savagery.'

Mr. Gomme's somewhat lax use of the words Aryan race does not affect the argument: nor is it material to our present inquiry whether those below the wedge inherit the qualities of a more primitive race or of the less progressive members of one more advanced. The purpose of this essay is not to indicate how the submerged section of the populace should be dealt with, but to call for a more enlightened treatment of a problem of such capital importance. If these 'unemployables' are survivals of more primitive conditions, as the evidence appears to indicate, it is for anthropologists to illumine the darkness. For many years they have been employed in collecting, examining, and classifying data concerning primitive folk past and present. The amount of information now available is enormous; and if divergent theories are held on the more abstruse points this is a condition common to all progressive sciences and need not impede their usefulness.

In those matters which concern the welfare of the submerged classes anthropology is, and has long been, in a position to assist. It can, for example, furnish exact information regarding the characteristics and aptitudes of people in various stages of advancement, and show, in some degree, how these are modified by racial peculiarities: it can advise as to the environment best suited to them, the conditions in which they can function to the best advantage, and the kind and degree of control to which they most easily submit. Anthropologists and welfare workers operating in unison may be expected to discover how humanism may best mitigate the severity of nature's methods: for the method of nature is the same as that of progressive industry—namely, to scrap the obsolete and useless patterns. Hitherto the Army, the Navy, the

mercantile marine, and farming have been regarded as almost the only outlets for the unfortunate survivors of earlier conditions. But anthropology could show how hopelessly wrong is this restricted view. Almost the earliest productions of the human race that have been preserved show that some primitive people have great artistic skill. Music, again, is almost a passion among many barbaric races in the present day ; while craftsmanship of all kinds appeals to many who are unable to endure the monotony of modern industry. Doubtless inquiry in the right quarter would elicit much valuable information which is now buried in volumes of anthropology, ethnology, and folklore, or in the brains of those who use it only for academic discussion. It is knowledge for which the world is starving.

SAUL.

(FOR A PICTURE.)

ON the bleak height Gilboa, impotent,
 Stood Saul, God's chosen, the mighty conqueror
 And bloodless crown of Israel. That hour sent
 One reeling fume of frankincense and myrrh
 Through the night's Temple. Pondering he stood,
 Shrunk in the stark circumference of the sky
 To a mere stripling shepherd, save that mood
 Of the caged lion within to know him by.
 . . . A stone slides then fearing the sound it makes ;
 And lo ! under his raging eyes uprose
 A young man armed, hard-breathed, as one who shakes
 A weight of horror from him, and who knows
 The shade of death past : his exultant eyes
 Up-gazing blenched to meet red blind despair.

Suddenly the purple splendour breaks, and dyes
 With one long bleeding gash the darkened air. . . .

EIRENE WILLIAMS.

A HEBRIDEAN ISLAND AND ITS BIRDS.

AWAY to the west of the Isle of Mull—that romantic land of hill and glen—and set in the tireless waters of the broad Atlantic is the island of which I write.

In olden days a crofter and his family had their home here and eked out a precarious existence from their small croft and the fishing. But for many years now the island has been deserted and is given over to the sea birds and to the tribe of the seals. Lying as it does full open to the south-west where the nearest land is the far distant American coast the island stands, a diminutive barrier, against the force of the Atlantic swell which, during the season of storms, sweeps the smooth-worn rocks and thunders on the out-lying reefs for weeks on end. But with the coming of February though the storms may rage still with great violence the air is laden with a curious intangible essence—the coming of the Spirit of Spring.

First of all to respond to this impulse is the pair of dark ravens that have their home on the island. Before February is out the new nest is complete—or maybe the birds content themselves with repairing the nest they occupied the previous season—and if the spring be an early one the hen is brooding on her clutch of greenish mottled eggs by the first days of March. Most hardy of birds is the raven. No snowfall is sufficiently severe to compel her to desert her eggs; she broods through a blizzard undismayed.

But on these islands of the Atlantic snow rarely lies, and the raven is able to hatch out her brood undisturbed by ice and snow, and secure from the unwelcome attentions of gamekeepers who would give these birds a short shrift were they to extend their range to the grouse moors of the mainland.

During these months of early spring the ravens have few bird companions on the island—they share it with a pair of peregrine falcons and a few of those sea-birds of most sinister reputation, the great black-backed gulls.

At times the peregrines nest on the island, but more often they lay their eggs and—should all go well with them—rear their young in the rocky hill-face of a sister island a couple of miles distant. The eyrie is quite accessible, and I remember on one occasion approaching the hollow in which the nest was situated and actually

showing my face at the entrance before the brooding falcon was aware that anything was amiss !

On seeing the sudden apparition not more than four feet from her the peregrine stood, petrified with fear, beside her eggs, nor could she summon up sufficient courage to fly out until I had withdrawn my head from view. The season of the nesting of the peregrine falls, as a rule, early in April, and even by this date the raven should have hatched out her brood.

A pair of buzzards nest on the island, and not far from their nesting ledge a pair of grey crows, birds which can here exercise their egg-sucking propensities to the full.

Till the coming of May, then, the island is peopled with few birds, and there is here comparative silence should one land from a boat on a sunny morning of April. But with the first days of May there arrive at this sea-girt isle a multitude of feathered people, so that the island is quiet no longer but throbbing with life and activity. Here may now be seen companies of intelligent razorbills, and in greater numbers guillemots of refined though foolish aspect. But the bird that frequents the island in greatest numbers is the puffin.

This quaint bird is present here during the nesting season literally in thousands, and the surface of the ocean is at times darkened by them as they swim and bathe themselves of a summer morning. Most consequential of birds is the puffin.

He always seems to me to resemble a dignified and respectable club-man—unruffled, unperturbed, and taking life—which he finds a pleasant thing—with rare philosophy and calm. But for all that, life to the puffin is full of dangers. Great black-backed gulls at times lie in wait for him at the entrance to his nesting burrow and pounce on the luckless bird as he emerges, either swallowing him whole or—a more terrible fate—disembowelling him and having devoured the entrails, leaving the victim, perhaps still alive, to perish miserably.

With the coming of May there arrive at their nesting cliffs many graceful kittiwakes, most charming and contented of all gulls. In the kittiwake there seems implanted a curiously strong love for its nest. For weeks before they have commenced to lay the birds sit or stand contentedly upon the platforms of the nests of previous seasons, and likewise in late summer, when the young have left the nest, or when, perhaps, some misfortune has robbed the kittiwakes of their eggs or broods, they still haunt their nest,

standing, the pair of them, for hours at their home with every sign of happiness and contentment.

To the island before May is many days old there also come many lesser black-backed gulls. Unlike their larger relatives—the great black-backs—these gulls are summer visitors only to the Hebridean islands, and with the approach of autumn make their way to more southerly and less storm-swept latitudes.

On the higher slopes of the island Manx shearwaters have their summer home, choosing as their nesting sites the rabbit burrows where they remain in darkness during the hours of daylight and emerge only at dusk. It has always seemed to me curious that this bird should be entirely of nocturnal habits while at its nesting site, while at sea it may be observed flying actively with graceful and charming flight even on days of most brilliant sunshine. Yet one may time after time visit an island on which thousands of these petrels are nesting and yet see not a single one till long past sunset.

The last summer visitor to arrive at the island is perhaps the most charming and interesting of them all.

Less than a swallow in size is this small bird of the ocean, and so frail that it is hard to realise how it is able to face the Atlantic storms of winter. To this small wanderer the name storm petrel has been given from the fact that its appearance to the mariner presages a storm or heavy weather.

The word petrel is, I believe, derived from the habit of fluttering down to the surface of the ocean for an instant or two and skimming the waters with drooping feet just touching the sea—and thus, like St. Peter of old, walking on the water. It is not until the very end of June, when full summer is come to the island, and when no night in these northerly latitudes falls on the ocean, that the storm petrel comes in from the immense tracts of the Atlantic. Here it has spent the winter and spring, hundreds of miles from the nearest land, and riding out the storms which, day after day, for many weeks on end sweep the surface of the sea. The wing power of this little petrel must be quite untiring, for there must be many days and nights in succession when the Atlantic is too storm-tossed for it to alight on the waters for more than a second or two at a time. Thus throughout the long and dark December nights and short hours of misty daylight the storm petrel must wheel continuously in flight, skimming the great waves and without a moment's respite battling with the storm.

How during such stormy spells can the small traveller obtain sleep? It would seem as though it were compelled to forgo all rest for many days at a time. That not infrequently it is exhausted by the gales is apparent from the fact that not a winter passes but a few of the birds, tired out and perhaps dying, are found in the most unlikely places many miles from the coast. Of all birds the storm petrel is the latest to nest. Not till the opening days of July are the first eggs laid, and in late August at a time when puffin and guillemot have completed their nesting and have left the island with their young, some of the storm petrels are still brooding their solitary egg on which they sit for five weary weeks.

Thus the young are not able to take wing until well into the autumn when the season of storms is rapidly approaching—indeed may have already commenced. I have often wondered that this small bird should be so late with her nesting. One would have imagined that it were important for her chick to be hardy and vigorous before the settled weather of summer left the Atlantic. But the nesting of all birds both on land and on sea is influenced by the food available for their young, and I imagine it is for this reason that the storm petrel delays until July the depositing of her single egg in the twilight of the crannies amongst the rocks and boulders of this Hebridean isle.

I know the island at every season of the year—in winter when the spray from the great Atlantic waves drifts on the wings of the storm over the topmost point of the grassy hill, and in spring when all the mountain ranges of the mainland and of the Isle of Skye stand out in the clear sunshine with the smoke of many heather fires rising, blue and ethereal, into the quiet air. But of all the seasons it is during the months of June and July, in fine steady weather, as the fishermen say, that the charm of this lonely island is at its height.

At this season, accompanied by a kindred lover of the island and its birds, I have pitched my tent on the green, grassy slopes and day by day busied myself with the study and photographing of the island birds. During such days of summer it is good to have one's home on the island. By reason of its configuration there is always shelter from the wind on some part of the island, and the sun shines on the sheltered slopes with great power and warmth. And what can be finer than from one's tent to see the first of the sunrise on the north-eastern horizon where from

behind a range of conical and far-distant hills the sun, a red glowing ball, first appears? And then when full daylight is come, what a marvellous view of hill, sea and glen can be spied from the summit of the little hill.

Eastward lie the great hills of the Scottish mainland, and when on the island the sun shines bright and warm, dark thunder clouds often shroud these hills, and then, perhaps, from the clouds one can see the rain descending in torrents until all view in that direction is blotted out. One hill there is rising straight from the deep waters of the Atlantic that attracts to itself many clouds, so that even in the finest weather the mountain-top is often shrouded in thin mist. And of a summer's night what can be finer than to sit near the summit of the island and watch the sun slowly setting far out into the Atlantic, and afterwards in the gathering dusk to see, one by one, tiny lamps appear from the misty spaces of the sea as the various lighthouses send forth their lights to guide the big ships or the sturdy drifters and trawlers at their fishing?

And then with the twilight there would emerge from the crevices where they had passed the long hours of daylight many of the tribe of the storm petrel. To and fro would these small birds flit with swallow-like flight, and from the crannies between the boulders their brooding mates would utter curious purring notes, pleasant to the ear and quite unlike those of any other bird.

Throughout the few hours of night they and the shearwaters would have the island to themselves and would be the only birds stirring, but by sunrise many puffins and guillemots would be arriving at the island with their night's catch of silvery herring fry or sand eels for their hungry youngsters, and all would be bustle and activity once more, and the air would resound with many cries.

With the coming of autumn the summer bird visitors to the island take their departure for the open sea, and except for the storm petrels, which linger on till October and November, the island is left to the buzzard and raven and to the lordly peregrine and wicked greater black-back.

But with the approach of winter a new bird people arrive at the island. Many swift-flying barnacle geese coming on the north wind from the frozen regions that approach the Pole and seeing it from afar recognise it as their winter home. And so with much calling among themselves they glide downwards and

together alight on the grassy slopes. They remain throughout the winter on the island, feeding on the pasture that, warmed by the soft Atlantic wind, remains green even when on the mainland the grass is browned and withered by the frosts. Here then the wild geese live until April; until, perhaps, the first days of May, and they may even see the coming of the summer hosts of birds to the island before rising in a body and setting their course for Spitzbergen. There or in kindred lands set far beyond the Arctic Circle they remain during the short northern summer, making their nests about the precipices that approach the Eternal Snows—nor do they think further of the island which gave them food and shelter when all the Arctic lands were fast in the grip of ice and snow.

SETON GORDON.

THE WORD OF AN ENGLISHMAN.

BY JOHN HASLETTE VAHEY.

JUST as South America was once the Golconda of explorers and adventurers, it is to-day the last place in the world for failures. Living is dear, luxury rampant, and there is little hope for the man who has no definite place in the scheme of things.

Trenchard was one of those decent, well-meaning, intelligent men who have no luck, who are always just before or just after the Fair; who fill up their square lives trying to fit round holes, and starve where others manage to live abundantly. Luck, or Fate, or Circumstance, whichever you like to call it, had dealt hardly with him. He had started mining in Colombia, and found the vein run out just as his money began to do the same. From Colombia he had trekked to Brazil, and invested the remains of his funds in a flutter in coffee. When that fell through, he got a job as an accountant with a planter near Sao Paulo, and had the misfortune to suffer from the fault of an assistant, who, in arranging a very ingenious embezzlement, cleverly cooked the books so as to involve his superior, and to get a good start before the real trouble was discovered.

Trenchard resignedly shook the dust of Brazil from his feet, and worked his way in a freighter to Monte Video, and thence went over into Buenos Ayres. This he found a city of millionaires, with a cold eye for the vagrant citizen who could flaunt no visible means of subsistence before the eyes of a corrupt and mercenary police. Still, it was in Buenos Ayres that he fell in with a small party of Englishmen who were anxious to find sport and relaxation in the Entre Rios, and to them he offered his services as guide.

The difficulty was that he knew nothing about Entre Rios, except the way there and a few facts he had picked up in the city library, and, though the Englishmen were green enough in their way, their viridity was not sufficiently glaring to blind them to the quickly appearing fact that Trenchard was only feeling his way.

The head of the party told Trenchard so when they were well up country, but being a generous man, he handed Trenchard a wad of local currency, a box of rifle and revolver ammunition, and

a grub-stake. Trenchard, who was always polite, thanked him, swallowed the accompanying reproaches as payment for the goods, and found himself alone, workless, and rather despairing in the river town of Santa Clara. But even now there was no permanent resting place for the sole of his foot. The jefe politico came to him on the second day after the English party had left, and genially invited him to pass on.

'It will be better for you, señor, also,' he purred, fingering his long mustachios. 'Then there is going to be a revolution soon, and someone may mistake you for someone else, so altogether I warn you that Santa Clara is unhealthy.'

Trenchard was tiring of these hints about revolution. He had heard of many past, present, and to come, and the two or three he had seen were not for ferocity and concrete results to be compared to an average dog-fight. 'That is all right, señor mio,' he said stubbornly; 'but I have got to get a living somewhere, and I can't afford to travel all the time.'

The jefe blinked his eyes. 'So you want money, señor?'

'I always have,' said Trenchard stiffly.

The jefe brightened up. 'Then, señor, I may have something to show you,' he said, and drew from under his poncho a tattered and rather dirty handbill, which he passed with a flourish to Trenchard.

'Mire V, señor!' he said. 'There! I am delighted beyond bounds that I have been able to assist you.'

Trenchard thanked him and looked at the handbill, which was headed by a fearful photograph of a man's head, but so smudged and blurred in the reproduction that it might have stood for a portrait of a nigger who had been under a steam roller! Underneath were set forth the facts that the famous and most savage revoltoso, Augusto Murillo, slayer of babes, wives, and patriots, bandit, butcher, and renegade, was reported to be promoting a revolution on the borders of Paraguay. Anyone who would trap, snare, shoot, stab, or seize him was therefore informed that there was a reward of five thousand dollars offered for the beneficent deed, and the production of any respectable portion of the bandit's frame, in default of the whole, would be accepted as proof, and entitle the producer to the above reward.

'I suppose I should get paid if I brought his ear?' asked Trenchard ironically, in the bitterness of his spirit.

'Not so,' said the jefe shrewdly, 'for then you might fetch the

second and ask for another reward, or that scoundrel Murillo might be in collusion with you to sacrifice an ear and share the reward !'

Trenchard shrugged. 'What good is this to me ?'

The jefe was indignant. 'Señor, what would you have ? There is a large reward to be earned, and surely it will be useful to you. All that one has to do is to kill this bandit.'

'Where is he then ?'

The jefe shrugged his shoulders. 'Someone has said that he was seen in the river swamp at Calostos—who knows ? But obviously the reward is a large sum.'

It was quite obvious to Trenchard now that there was no place for him in Entre Rios, and no money to be earned there by the sweat of his brow. The reward was a concrete thing. Murillo was alive somewhere, and he might as well be far away hunting the fellow, as leaving the poor remnants of his local currency in the hands of the mercenary Santa Clara shop-keepers.

When it became known that he was really intending to go out and search for the well-known bandit he received a thousand thanks and a great deal of miscellaneous advice. Everyone seemed to know exactly where Murillo was, but it seemed to Trenchard that he must be like Sir Boyle Roche's famous bird, in a great many places at once, and the suggestions were not very helpful. Then more definite news came in by the mouth of a Paraguayan Indian, who had seen the veritable Murillo alone and moving swiftly towards the tiny Indian village near Chagros. Further news came in to confirm this, of a fight between a revolutionary band and the Government troops near that place, which had resulted in the band being cut up and only the leader escaping.

This was good enough for Trenchard. He counted out his money again, bought a few stores, looked to his rifle and revolver, and rode off towards Chagros, with the suggestive handbill in his pocket.

Trenchard found the Indians friendly enough when they learned his errand, and also full of suggestions which were well meant but indefinite. One half-breed among them, however, was more shrewd than the rest.

'Señor,' he said in his bastard Spanish, 'it is about the nest that one finds the mother bird, and about the house of the woman that one finds the lover. This Murillo loves the Señorita Dolce Camoro, who lives about forty miles from here, and if the señor will watch near there he may see the bandito come.'

Now this was a distinct idea. If Murillo was beaten and flying, this was just the sort of thing he would do, to get protection and consolation in his difficulties. So Trenchard with new hope in his heart rode swiftly in the direction pointed out to him by the half-breed, and presently drew rein at the estancia inhabited by the Señor Camoro and his fascinating daughter Dolce.

They received him with politeness but reserve. He did not mention his errand of course, but they seemed suspicious from the first, and only the convention of pampas hospitality to the wayfarer induced them to proffer bed and board, nominally for ever and gratis, but, as Trenchard understood, for one night, after which he would be expected to trek further on.

'The house and all in it is yours, señor,' said Camoro. 'Take what you will, stay as long as you wish.'

Which is South American Spanish for 'I shall be glad if you will stop the night.'

Trenchard thanked him and had his horse put in the corral, while he himself supped with the estanciero and his daughter. The latter was very pretty, and ought to draw the bandit that way if anything could. She tried to pump Trenchard a little, but he was dumb on that subject, for it would be impossible to tell Murillo's adored that he had strolled that way with the intention of bringing back a respectable portion of the bandit's frame to sell to the Government for five thousand dollars.

After supper he sat on a bench, made out of two cows' heads, and smoked a long cigar, and talked of the local troubles. He found it difficult to understand Paraguayan politics. To some Murillo was a bloodthirsty bandit and the President of the Republic a white-souled babe—to others the President was a defilement upon the earth, an excrescence upon the State, and Murillo was a tame philanthropist, whose one aim was to inculcate virtue, honesty, and goodness in the peccant bosom of the people. But as they talked of these and other matters the door was suddenly opened, and a thin, short, rather pale-faced man came in, carrying a saddle over his shoulder.

'Buenas noches, señor, señorita,' he said. 'And to you, señor; I am your servant.'

Trenchard started. Was this Murillo? And he was unarmed!

'Neighbour,' said Señor Camoro, getting up and frowning, 'it would have been more mannerly if you had waited without the house until you had seen if we should welcome you. We are not

politicians, I and my daughter, but we like not those who hunt men for reward !'

Trenchard relaxed. He had not run into a hornet's nest after all.

The stranger bowed anxiously. 'Good neighbour, I beg of you pardon,' he muttered. 'You wrong me. What is Murillo to me ? Nothing, I assure you. I do not know where he is, and I do not meddle with these things.'

'Be seated then,' said the estanciero more calmly. 'Dolce, get the caballero something to eat. But indeed we had heard that you were hoping to obtain the reward,' he added, as his daughter went out.

'I am libelled, señor,' said the newcomer. 'Evil tongues are as common as frogs in a swamp, and make even more noise.'

'Vaya con Dios then,' said the old man. 'Perchance you and my other guest will go forth together to-morrow.'

'If the señor can tolerate my poor company'—the other bowed—'I shall esteem it of all things.'

Soon after dawn the next morning Trenchard and the other man breakfasted largely. But they saw nothing again of the señorita, and were waited upon by a coarse-looking girl, after which the old man had their horses brought round from the corral, and bade them farewell with many flattering words, but with an obvious air of relief.

It was only when they were clear of the estancia that Trenchard's companion turned to him with an easy smile. 'Señor,' he said, 'I think you too are seeking this bandit, and for the reward, even as I. Why not ? You are a stranger, you have no local ties, no local politics, and the reward is large.'

'Partly that,' said Trenchard, looking at him quietly. 'Partly because the man is a scoundrel, a murderer, a ruffian !'

'In the handbill,' said the other, laughing. 'Yet I have known a man be a murderer on one of those papers, and yet have the soul of a child.'

'Possibly,' said Trenchard. 'But naturally I should not hunt a man for reward if I believed him innocent.'

'You would not—word of an Englishman ?' asked the other curiously.

'On the word of an Englishman—no !'

This phrase '*palabra Inglés*,' word of an Englishman, is in South America something better than an oath. Though individual

Englishmen may be liars and forsworn, it is flatteringly assumed that the word of an Englishman is a bond which cannot be broken, and an almost pathetic importance is attached to its use.

The other man nodded. 'Let that run on the wall, señor. We have only the handbill to go by, and it justifies us in arresting this bribón. We, I say, for alone you can do nothing. You will waste your time. But I know my ground. I can show you where this fellow moves, and we shall share the reward together. Is it so?'

This seemed no more than the truth, and Trenchard had already begun to realise the large measure of his task. 'Be it so,' he said slowly. 'You have seen him then?'

'It is only yesterday,' said the other. 'He is living within ten miles of this, with two lieutenants in a hut, while the rest of his men are out scouring the country, harrying and slaying all the adherents of the—other party.'

'Then we must fight for it?'

'If necessary, but not if it can be arranged otherwise. Are you ready for all events?'

'Surely,' said Trenchard grimly.

They left the open country presently, and entered a belt of timber, which they penetrated to a depth of five miles. Then Trenchard's guide suggested that they should dismount. They got down, hobbled their horses, and fastening them by their head ropes to a tall tree, went forward cautiously to reconnoitre.

A hut stood in a little clearing about a mile from where the two dismounted, and from it came sounds of rather incoherent revelry. Within, a fat, bloated man swung in a huge grass hammock, singing between hiccups an endless song of many verses and the most dubious theme, while on the ground near him squatted two young men, with a dissipated air, beating time with bottles, and joining valorously in the alcoholic refrain.

'You hear him?' said Trenchard's partner, as a waft of broken song came to them through the screen of brush and lush vegetation, criss-crossed with lianas and creepers, behind which they now lay perdu. 'That is the butcher singing after he has killed.'

Trenchard grimaced disgust. 'Filthy brute,' he muttered.

He turned to look at his companion, and saw to his surprise that the latter was holding a revolver towards him, butt forward, while his face wore an enigmatic smile. 'What's this? I have my own.'

'Señor,' said the other politely, 'you are in need of money, and

it is easy to earn the reward, for I am Murillo, and those gentlemen beyond there in the hut are the Government leader General Obaldi and his colonels. They are, your ears will detect, the innocent patriots who have come out to kill me !'

Trenchard could hardly speak for amazement. It was true that the photograph on the handbill was so smudged that it was practically useless, but in any case his companion did not look like the baby-killer, murderer, and bandit referred to in the letterpress below.

'But you—you——' he stammered.

Murillo bowed. 'I am he, señor. Has it not always been the custom of my country to assume that power means innocence, and weakness crime ? Ah, señor, you do not know us. If I have killed as a soldier kills, I am a murderer and a baby-killer ; if I have raised money from my well-wishers I become a bandit. Go then ! Deliver me up to these honest, mild-mannered gentlemen beyond, whose troops are now out devastating the countryside because it has the ill-fortune to harbour me.'

'But the estanciero——' cried Trenchard.

A look of sadness came over Murillo's features. 'Would you have him betray me, the novio of his daughter ?'

Trenchard bit his lip. 'I told you that I would never hunt an innocent man, señor.'

'On the word of an Englishman,' the other assented. 'Yes, señor, and it was that assurance of yours that saved your life. Had I thought you a common, mercenary spy, I should not have hesitated ! But come, palabra Inglés, I assure you that I have never harmed woman or child, that I have never touched money other than that falling to me by the fortune of war. I am a patriot, a soldier, but I am not a savage or a bandito.'

Trenchard gently put the revolver to one side. 'I believe you,' he said. 'I can't touch blood-money !'

Murillo suddenly caught at his hand and wrung it hard. 'Thank you, señor. You are a man of honour'—he smiled suddenly—'yet I would have you touch this reward even now. The general and his lieutenants are drunk. Bind me, take me to them, and claim your reward.'

'Never !' said Trenchard, staring.

'But I wish it,' said Murillo softly. 'I will show you what knots you may use to tie me, and when you have touched the reward I give you my word that I shall free myself again.'

Trenchard laughed out. 'Jove!' he exclaimed. 'But——'

'No buts,' said Murillo. 'If they think of harming me, I give you permission to shoot them.'

'I'll do it,' said Trenchard. 'But a rope?'

Murillo felt under his poncho, and quickly undid a thin rope he carried coiled about his waist. 'Here, señor. I am ready.'

Trenchard bound him as directed, only leaving his legs free so that he could walk. And all the knots in the rope were shown him by the smiling revoltoso, who explained their purpose.

'They appear secure? Si, en verdad. But, as we understand, appearances are deceptive. In a moment I can undo the key knot, the others are nothing. But, quick; for we have only a few hours before the troops may return from their harrying.'

Trenchard drew his revolver. 'Get on then,' he said.

The three men in the hut did not hear anything of their approach until Trenchard himself appeared in the entrance, driving Murillo before him. Then the song suddenly ceased and gave way to panic and fury, the gentlemen with the bottles lurching to their feet, the fat general falling out of his hammock, and getting to his knees with an expression of fear coupled with drunken rage.

'Señores,' he mumbled, 'this intrusion . . . gentlemen enjoying themselves—hic——'

Trenchard saluted, but did not lower his revolver. 'I am speaking to the illustrious generalissimo Obaldi, I believe,' he said in his best Spanish. 'I have to report, excelentissimo, that I have captured the notorious bandit Murillo, and claim the reward of five thousand dollars offered for his arrest.'

At this momentous news the two dissipated young men grew soberer, but Obaldi, with a vicious glance at the captive, staggered to his feet and stumbled towards his sword, which was standing in a corner of the hut. 'Cut the—hic—bandito pieces,' he gurgled. 'Get my sword—Let me just——'

'General,' cried Trenchard sternly, 'the reward first, and then you may decide what you will do with him.'

Obaldi stood still, swaying a little, trying to compose his mouth. 'That's right—reward earned—worth paying, señor. Colonel Gomez, our treasury. Going to pay caballero, and then—then we'll have some—somusement with bandit—hic.'

The two colonels were obviously braver with a bottle than in battle. One whom he had addressed fetched a portfolio, which lay with a heap of other things in a corner, and brought it to Obaldi,

who opened it, and with stumbling fingers began to count out a wad of currency. All this time Murillo had stood smiling, but without a word.

Obaldi finished the counting, and handed the wad to Trenchard, who thrust it into his pocket. Then, with an insane mixture of mirth and fiendish cruelty on his face, the bloated general got his sword and stood swinging it into the air. 'Cut him in pieces,' he mumbled, glaring at Murillo.

'Excelentissimo,' put in one of the young men, smiling, 'all that seems too merciful for this bribón. Would it not be better to stake him out for the ants?'

Trenchard began to see red. The process of staking out consists in spread-eagling the victim on the ground in the sun, fastening his legs and arms to pegs with thongs of raw hide, which contract as the sun's heat works upon them.

'Stop!' he shouted. 'You damn beasts! Do you mean to say you would do that to a helpless prisoner?'

'Señor,' said Colonel Gomez, with a vicious, thin smile, 'you have your reward. Leave the prisoner, and go.'

Trenchard looked at them. Only the general had arms in his hand, and he was too drunk to do much if it came to a scrap. Without waiting further to calculate chances, he turned his revolver on Gomez. 'Hands up!' he said savagely. 'You are all my prisoners. And you, you fat swine of a general, put down that sword, or I'll give you what you deserve!'

The general was pot-valiant at least. While the young men sprang back and put up their hands, he gave a drunken grunt, and ran at Trenchard, whirling his sword.

The hut was narrow, and it is possible that he might have cut down Trenchard before the latter made up his mind to shoot, but Murillo kicked at him as he ran by, and brought him down in a cursing, squirming heap.

Trenchard leaped on him in a fury, and grappled with his sword hand. But the two men, seeing the revolver menace removed for the moment, picked up bottles and charged in.

Trenchard happened to see them come. He kicked out backwards viciously, and caught one of them in the middle, doubling him up, and Murillo, who had loosened his knots with the utmost celerity, sprang upon the second, and half strangled him before Trenchard rose triumphantly with Obaldi's sword in his hand.

'Now then,' he commanded, 'up with your hands, all of you, or we will try staking you out for a change.'

Murillo leaned against the wall of the hut, and laughed until the tears streamed down his face, as he saw the fat general and the two colonels sitting in a bunch with their hands uplifted.

'You dogs!' he said when he could speak, wiping the tears of mirth from his eyes. 'At how much do you value yourselves? I—a miserable bandito—am apparently worth five thousand dollars, and a general ought to be worth more.'

The three glared at him, but said nothing. He turned to Trenchard, who grinned back. 'And you, señor mio, can you value this lot?'

'I wouldn't give tuppence a dozen for them, with a paper bag to put them in, Murillo.'

'No,' said Murillo gravely, 'you are right. The price of hogs has gone down of late. Still they must be worth something, if only to themselves. What do you say to five thousand dollars for the fat one, and a thousand each for the others?'

'Let us say eight thousand for the lot,' said Trenchard. 'You hear, general? Eight thousand dollars for your lives. It is agreed?'

Obaldi grew purple. 'And you will release us?' he said in a smothered voice.

'We will shut you in here till your men return. Any bids?'

'We will pay,' said Obaldi furiously. 'But wait, wait——'

'No threats!' cried Murillo. 'Señor, if you will open their treasury and count out the sum agreed on, we will give a receipt and retire.'

'Right,' said Trenchard.

He got the portfolio, counted out the exact sum, and handed the wad with a bow to the anguished general. 'Check them, please.'

So Obaldi checked them, and Murillo gravely wrote out a receipt, and handed it over. It ran as follows.

'Received for the sale of three hogs the sum of eight thousand dollars. Augusto Murillo.'

'Now we must go—and quickly,' he said to Trenchard, broke the general's sword across, searched the two colonels and took away their weapons, and then backed out. They barricaded the door from without with the help of two fallen logs, warned the prisoners not to venture out on pain of death, and then ran swiftly through the wood.

They mounted and bolted then, going hell-for-leather towards the north, until they had put a good twenty miles between them and the hut. Then they drew up.

'Señor, you are a man,' said Murillo. 'I thank you. Also you are once more a capitalist. Between us we have gained rewards totalling thirteen thousand dollars, that is six thousand five hundred each. We will divide it now, and part. There is only one drawback—we cannot invest our capital in this country. Elsewhere we may have fortune. But I shall always remember with pleasure and gratitude the value of an Englishman's word.'

So they divided the spoils and parted, Murillo seeking shelter in a village over the Paraguayan border, and Trenchard striking the Parana at a point beyond the disturbed area, where he managed to dispose of his horse, and secure a passage on a boat going up-stream. He is an estanciero in Uruguay now, and has at last run out of his spell of ill-luck.

Certainly he deserves it. He is the only man known to have earned a reward for betraying the leader of a South American rebellion to the Government forces, obtaining a reward for the service, and then receiving another reward for sparing the life of the man who paid him the first. It is a thing that one cannot do every day!

*RECOLLECTIONS OF FREDERICK
LOCKER-LAMPSON.*

BY HIS SON, OLIVER LOCKER-LAMPSON.

II.

SCHOOL time came when I was nine, and I was bundled off to Cheam, where my brother had been educated before me. I have often heard my father describe my brother's first launch into scholastic life and the emotions which wrung him on saying good-bye. He and my mother sank back in the train which bore them away and could hardly speak for misery at the thought of having marooned their first-born so wantonly. Habit had doubtless blunted paternal sensibilities when my turn came, and I can call to mind no particular chagrin on their part when they took me for the first time to Cheam. Between them I trotted up the little track from the station to the school, and soon we were lost in a maelstrom of mothers in the private drawing-room where the headmaster and his wife received us. Other new boys, surprisingly spick and span it seemed to me, hung silently on the skirts of the company, and presently up comes the 'Head' himself, beaming, and pats me on the head.

'Wouldn't the little man like a piece of cake?' he inquires, bending down, and the little man assenting, a fistful of spongy substance, livid ochre in colour, is thrust into my grasp.

'There's rather a squash here,' I heard my father say to my mother. 'Let's go and eat it outside.'

So we ploughed a path through the party to the door and wandered forth. My brother, then at Eton, had accompanied my parents on this expedition, and the three of them walked ahead, while I loitered behind to consume the cake.

But alas! the task was beyond me—try as I would. In all my experience of village teas and nursery 'spreads' I had never been asked to negotiate anything comparable to this confection in stodginess. I nibbled the friable edges all the way round to reduce my burden and then attacked the main body with courage from every quarter. But no! Jaws and stomach combined to defeat me, and I gazed at the monstrous offering in despair. I simply could not swallow it. But I dared not reveal my impotence.

On the threshold of a new career there could not, there must not, be failure. Yet my short suit offered no hiding-place, while to throw it away was to be discovered at once.

So I looked about me, and there at the end of the drive stood an open gate of solid wood, fastened back against the grass border. My eye measured its menacing height, and hope fluttered within me. I could just do it. I would let the trio walk on past the gate and lag behind long enough to reach my hand up to the gate-top and drop my troubles over.

They were still deep in talk when I reached the gate. I went on munching crumbs out of my left hand by way of diversion while I manœuvred the other hand with its detestable burden up towards the gate-top. But it was cruelly high. I squeezed against the woodwork and stood on tiptoe—yet my fingers seemed inches from the top. I strained and stretched. My father was turning; I must be speedy, very speedy. The only chance of getting it over now without his seeing was by a swift final fling. So I averted my eyes, shot up my hand and let go. A huge splodge of cake struck me on the cheek and bounded off into the centre of the drive as my father veered round.

He saw my attitude, my expression and the cake, and in one second he had divined.

‘Quick, quick!’ he cried to my mother. ‘Before anyone comes out of the door. Help him!’ And he swiftly applied the tortoiseshell-handled cane to wheedling that jaundiced mass on to the grass, whence he drove it piecemeal, with steady stabs, into oblivion beneath the gate.

‘Why should you eat cake if you don’t like it?’ said he, smiling sympathetically. ‘Certainly not. If you can’t digest it, then it’s quite natural to decide to get rid of it before you swallow it. Cheer up, little dog’; and he took my hand and walked me to the house, crestfallen, yet consoled.

Never was I more grateful to anyone before.

‘Perhaps you would like now to get to know some of your school friends,’ he continued, when we were inside. So off we pushed through dim uncarpeted corridors to a playground where some boys were kicking a football about.

Here after a few rather silent moments he bade me good-bye and left me; and I remained all alone, a spectator of strange boys at play, until on looking up I saw that my father had not really gone. He had only pretended to go, when he re-entered the

house by the glass door, and I could see him still, though he stood far back from the window where he thought he was invisible. There he was, watching me out of his eye-glass, and I knew instinctively that he was hoping to catch a sight of me happily at play before he went.

I must not disappoint him.

So I dashed at the football as it came round, to the unmeasured astonishment of the players, who had not reckoned upon this support to their team.

Simultaneously a boy emerged from the house, rather lost and sheepish, and the players ceased punting the football and gathered round him and me.

'Are you a new boy?' they asked the fresh-comer.

'Yes,' he said.

'What's your name?'

'D——'

'What's your father?'

'A merchant.'

'Yes! But what sort of merchant? What does he make?'

'Porcelain baths.'

'Is he rich?'

'Oh, yes! Very.'

Then they turned to me.

'Are you a new boy?' one asked.

'Yes,' I replied.

'What's your name?'

I had been warned it was unmanly to give my Christian name.

'Locker-Lampson,' I said therefore.

They looked at one another with puckered brows.

'Gosh! What a mouthful!' cried one.

'What's your father?' pursued the original questioner.

'A poet,' I answered.

'Does he write poetry?' he asked naively.

'Why, yes,' said I, a trifle troubled.

'Is he rich?'

'I don't know,' I replied.

'Don't know!' cried an older freckled boy with red hair.

'Don't know. Why, doesn't poetry pay?'

'Not good poetry,' said I very solemnly, and I remember turning to see if the figure still watched. But it had gone.

Letters from my father to me at school were welcome visitors,

and I came to watch the post for that tight, trim handwriting. One letter in particular I recollect which arrived upon my tenth birthday, and puzzled me by its exactitude and brevity. It did not seem to *flow* quite like other epistles ; so in a fit of confidence I took it to a friendly master who explained the mystery. It was a letter in rhyme, and as I have never forgotten those simple lines, I give them as memory repeats them :

‘ Dear Olly, it has been my joy
To know you as a baby boy ;
I’ve often had you on my lap,
A little, cosy, chirping chap.
And now they tell me, to my sorrow,
That you are to be *ten to-morrow*.’

Holidays lightened our lot at appointed intervals, and not the least of our delights at home was our father’s discourse at meals. He could talk to anyone and about anything. He did not seek to command conversation and he never competed for listeners. But in lulls he let fly javelins of jaunty wit and wisdom. His stories were delicately woven, and he would tell them in a low voice with a minimum of emphasis, yet he seldom failed to satisfy his audience. I fancy success often lay in the unforeseen flick which this courtly raconteur could give to the tale-end of a joke or a freakish phrase or a spurt of fun. How full in retrospect those golden mealtimes were with my father’s seasoned philosophy and yarns.

There was the anecdote of the man found by two policemen in an omnibus accident with his head twisted round and the wind knocked out of him, whom the policemen sympathetically seized, and whose head they proceeded tenderly to untwist, at which the poor fellow, through struggles of breathlessness and resistance, just manages to mutter ‘ Born so, born so.’ Or there was the tale of a famous but impoverished oyster-eater who strolled into an oyster-shop one day, ordered five dozen and swallowed the lot with greedy gusto ; but who rose, when asked to pay, dived into his trouser pockets, and was only able to pull out empty linings, the tips of which he held with finger and thumb in dumb show of their nakedness ; after which he caught up his coat tails, bent himself meekly forward and proffered the rear of his anatomy to the shop proprietor’s boot with the words : ‘ You may kick me if you wish.’ Many were these little stock stories and funny fancies ; small beer, no doubt, to readers of frigid print but vintage with what experts call

a 'bouquet' when uncorked to a charmed family circle of those tender years. And no less familiar and constant were our father's pleasantries and banter, for he could not bear the thought of his offspring becoming what he called 'buttoned-up,' and he sought to 'sharpen the children's wits' as he expressed it, by lacing his talk with impromptu rhymes, fanciful nonsense, and even, even puns. 'His end was peace,' I can hear him say to me as he carved the rabbit I had shot, 'will you have a piece of his end?' and then, after a farrago of fun, feeling perhaps that he had reached the limit of humorous extravagance, he might wind up by way of warning with the story of his grandfather who hated riddles. If these were started at this august sire's table, he waited until the stock seemed spent and then put this single poser:

'I'm not a duck, nor yet a teal,
But I'm a roasted loin of veal.'

'What am I?' he would roar, and after many minutes spent by his guests in far-sought, fruitless solutions he would rap out, 'Why, a roasted loin of veal, of course,' and the disabused company would collapse under the rebuff of this deliberately banal answer, designed by our great-grandfather to crush conundrums as a low form of humour in conversation.

There is shame in reviving moribund family jests. It is like keeping on the electric bulbs in a room until the light of morning turns them pale. Yet one more will I venture.

Our establishment boasted a cook, Scotch by race, female in sex, and monumental in size. Her bulk obliterated the other servants in the morning procession to prayers, and subjugated the household by its massy dignity. We will call her Verrier, and she served the family faithfully over many years of unalloyed culinary bliss. There was but one *contretemps*, which arose when my father one day left hurriedly for London, and was given a luncheon basket by my mother. Whether the contents of this basket really left something to be desired, or whether inspiration visited my father *par excellence* in transit, history does not record; but on reaching town he dashed out a telegram in verse to my mother as follows:

'Your cook a bad cutter,
My sandwich no butter.'

In my mother's absence from the house this telegram was opened by the butler, and it is not out of place to observe that the fat was

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in the fire. My mother returned to find Mrs. Verrier's portly person blocking the boudoir door. Haughty and decided she had come to give notice. Her profession, her capacities, and her feelings had all been gravely outraged in a public telegram of two lines. There had been reference to sandwiches cut by the cook, and if people didn't know the duties of a cook what oughter know them better than to mix them with kitchenmaids, then it was time she looked out for another situation. She hadn't put a finger to the buttering of bread these twenty years, and it was a shame she should be put upon so at her time of life.

My mother pleaded in vain, but was reinforced in the evening by my father, who stood overwhelmed at the result of his exercise of poetic licence. But he won Mrs. Verrier round in the end. He blandly explained to her the technique of rhythm and rhyme. He knew, he said, as well as she did that no self-respecting cook ever buttered bread or cut sandwiches, but to make his verse scan he must use a monosyllable in the first line. Now 'kitchenmaid,' albeit accurate, was a word of three syllables, and not a pleasant word either, being destitute of all euphony and charm. Whereas 'cook,' 'cook' (my father rolled it out) fitted the line tightly, satisfied his poetic conscience, and lastly, oh! Mrs. Verrier! lastly it conjured up the form of one whose devotion to the family no member of it could ever forget. Blame him she still might and could, but by rights she should blame the rascally English language which couldn't help a poet in a hurry better than that.

Well! one evening after dinner we sat over the fire and a discussion arose between myself and my brother as to the identity of the famous illusionists Maskelyne and Cook,¹ whose performance we had recently witnessed open-eyed at the Egyptian Hall. Were there really two partners, we asked, and if so, why did only one appear on the stage at a time? Had anyone seen both simultaneously? We debated the problem keenly in and out, coming to no clear decision. Our father had sat meanwhile in silence, and then with one accord we turned to him for enlightenment. 'Are they one and the same person, or separate people?' we demanded.

'I don't know,' said he slowly, 'whether Maskelyne is Cook or Cook Maskelyne. But this I do know to my cost, that Mrs. Verrier is both masculine *and* cook.'

But my father's conversation excelled in the exercise of playful

¹ Now Maskelyne and Devant.

contradiction, and in particular when the rigours of my mother's morality came not actually into collision but into sprightly contact with his own adroit raillery. Indeed the complete difference of their natures, upbringing and religious tendencies made some such sparkling engagements inevitable, although no union could have been more blessed than theirs. They bore the lamp of love between them without a falter to the grave.

The nature of my mother's religion was evangelical, and it expressed itself along missionary and teetotal lines : and her business-like creed coloured the little affairs of every day. Its influence was consequently reflected in the literature and the company of her choice ; and these not unnaturally stood out rather notably in juxtaposition to the objects of my father's friendship and fancy. Hortatory texts and monitory mottoes, at times rather crude in their pigmentation, rivalled rare etchings upon the walls of her own room ; while the *Sunday at Home* and *The Leisure Hour* rubbed suspicious shoulders with Sotheby catalogues and the *Athenæum* upon desks and tables of the house. They might have rubbed shoulders with company still more doubtful had they been allowed ; for my father purchased detective 'yellow-backs' often, and even a daffodil-coloured French novel at times. But he knew better than to leave *them* loose with *The Leisure Hour*. My mother would not actually purloin them, but she had a habit of quietly secreting them 'where the servants can't see them'—beneath cushions and newspapers, or tucked away in drawers. And Wilkie Collins or Gaboriau might emerge after days of eclipse with one of those gospel messages, worked in worsted upon canvas, marking the page where my father had left off.

And as with literature, so in life. Labour in the mission field or in the cause of total abstinence had an unconquerable champion in my mother ; and while my father fondled folios 'in the sweet silence of the musty bookshelves,' she must be enrolling inebriates in the Band of Hope, or launching evangelists into Darkest Africa. So that it was not unlikely for a reclaimed drunkard, a black bishop, or a war-worn missionary to exchange confidences at our table with the most bizarre enthusiasts—short-haired women and long-haired men—who had 'come down on a visit to the books.'

Yet the result was not really incongruous. Both parents had too just a sense of humour for that. Rather their divergence of outlook led to the most stimulating interludes in the day's formal round ; and we children sat spectators of enthralling encounters

between our mother's earnest orthodoxy and our father's aloof persiflage. And there was no question of our taking sides. For our father did not set out to win. As long as he could say what he liked, she could do what she liked. If only he might exercise his humour freely, to her could go final victory in the lists. And it was (I think) the knowledge that these jousts would end in a draw, which reconciled them to our tender hearts.

They would begin much as follows. We would be seated (let us say) round the oval dining-room table for mid-day luncheon, and my mother would perhaps start. She might ask us, for instance, how we liked the new game we had played on Sunday—the only game sanctioned upon that sacred day. 'Missionary Loto' it was called, and it had been allowed upon Sunday because the board upon which we operated was charted with the geography of missionary endeavour, while the counters were a veritable 'Who's Who' of biblical celebrities from Genesis to Revelation. And having asked us our opinion, my mother would urge the 'satisfactoriness' of this game, since the missionary who had just preached in her little Hall approved of it. And he a miraculous man, who had devoted his life to God and the Gospel for years in Greenland, and was now returned for good, a wreck from the rigours of the climate—his feet frost-bitten and his poor nose dented and for ever blue and red.

My father would give a little cough—premonitory in purpose and commence. What was this Loto he had heard so much about? A game or a religion? Oh, a game! Well, then, if a game, might he just inquire why it was admissible on the day of rest? Ah! because it was missionary, named after places in Palestine and people in Holy Writ. Hem! An odd definition of 'Missionary'! But still—let that pass. So games then were justified for the Sabbath—not upon their merits but apparently upon their nomenclature.

My mother stirs a little anxiously, but hopes for the best. My father is meanwhile abstracted and unnoticing. We, however, are all attention now—our little pink ears pricked!

That being so, proceeds my father blandly, might he put a further question which both occurred to him and rather perplexed him? It concerned the billiard-room, the doors of which were barred fast to all and sundry upon the Sabbath day. Quite rightly barred, no doubt, to prevent anything so pagan as such a pursuit upon such a day. Yet by analogy with the engaging game of Loto,

might it not be possible to afford a little skilled Sunday recreation with cue and ball by the simple process of calling the game by the requisite name! Now what about 'Missionary Billiards' for a title!—why not?

My mother is alert now, alive at last to the deadly direction of the conversation, and is trying to catch my father's attention by kicking the footstool towards him and beckoning to him across the table. But quite regardless he proceeds.

Now let us see, he muses. Could we not call the table Goshen, he suggests, the end-pockets Dan and Beersheba, the balls Peter and Paul and John, and a good cue Jehu—'for he driveth furiously,' and behold! billiards becomes a Sunday game.

The butler, who had hardly awaited this finale, sneezes suddenly into the spinach which he is handing round and repairs to the seclusion of the screen in order to overcome his emotions, while a titter stirs ominously in the audience.

Still my father remains oblivious: only his eyebrows are working prophetically. He has left billiards. He is talking now about the missionary and that nose of his. Yes, it was inflamed. Indeed it was. He had noticed that. In fact, who could help noticing it? Poor, poor fellow! Well! he had always understood that cold climates provoked red noses.

My mother has become by this time actively alarmed to the extent of launching a counter-conversation which she conducts with volubility and deliberate clamour. It is designed to engage hearers, fill time, and divert dangers. But there must be lulls in the firing, gaps in the barrage, and he watches warily, skirmishing on the flanks, and biding his chance for a long final lunge. It seems he is not going to get it, so swift and continuous is her onslaught. But at last there falls a pause, a tear in the talk, and through it we hear his clear level voice relentlessly inquire: 'And might I perhaps be told exactly how long ago it is since this good missionary signed the pledge?'

She had fought hard to parry the insinuation, clawing the air at him at the last, and calling out 'Fred, Fred, the children!' and 'Not before the servants, Fred!' But the shaft has struck, the ripple of amusement revives, circles the table, rises to general commotion, in which even the governess has to join! Amid which my mother still mutely beckons and strives, biting her lip very hard; until she, too, is caught and overwhelmed herself in laughter.

After which, when the meal is done and he is seated with his

coffee before the fire, she will come round and stroke his head, and tell him how 'naughty' he has been. And he will hold her hand and turn to me and say 'Oliver, we may enjoy our fun, and laugh and joke, but we wouldn't have her different for worlds, would we, little dog?' And after that my mother will take me upstairs and tell me that here below we must all be either stumbling-blocks or stepping-stones, and pray God I may become only a vessel of honour. And she will confide to me a great hope she nourishes that her dear husband, who in early days might perhaps have wandered in indifference, may ever now continue in the faith and love of God. And once she opened her keepsake box and unwrapped from their crumpled tissue-paper coats two little books: one a copy of the 'Golden Treasury,' annotated by my father and Tennyson, with this little rhyme on the title-page:

THIS BOOK IS TO GO TO JANIE.

'She loves the book, but a love, yet stronger,
Contents her to wait for it—not much longer.'

F. L. Oct. '74.

the other, 'The Children's Garland,' with these lines on the cover:

JANIE FROM F. L.

June, 1877.

'A book for a day that is fair or rainy,
A book for the fairest . . . and that is Janie.'

And she told me that on her death they would become mine (as indeed they now have) for my wife if I should marry, and God grant that this mystic lady of the future would be as happy with me as she herself was with my father.

III.

The last holidays came (my first from Eton), and I remember finding my father what the servants called 'ailing.' He had taken to spending the evenings upstairs, and we missed the sound of his cough from the Strong Room, and the form of him bending over his books in the little halo of light cast by the long-tailed candle. But we visited him in his room on the first floor, and found him cheerful and particularly anxious to interest us in poetry. He handled a brown, dumpy Wordsworth and strove

to lead me captive with the glories of 'Tintern Abbey.' But alas!—I think these efforts were rather vain. For I had returned from school with a new rifle, and the effect of this weapon upon rats was the subject of daily and nightly experiment. Looking back, I feel this flightiness must have saddened him, especially as my sister Dorothy, aged sixteen, showed profound interest in all he wrote and read.

Yet my father took his old interest in his surroundings, and livened up one day when my brother broke a china plate—of no particular value. The pieces disappeared mysteriously, but the plate emerged soon whole again from my father's study, welded into one apparently solid surface upon which a little label now showed with these words :

' Who broke the plate ? '
' I,' said G. Locker, ' I,
Ere Kate could cock her eye,
I, full of mockeri,
I smashed the crockeri,
I broke the plate ! '

This was the last verse he ever wrote.

I went back to school and plunged into its countless distractions ; and then one day as I stood in a group of boys, there came a message from my tutor, who wished to see me at once.

' You're going to get it,' said an encouraging companion, whose recent visits to our tutor warranted painful prophecy, and along I went in some trepidation. ' Oliver,' he began, and it was the first time an Eton master had called me that. ' I'm afraid your father is very ill,' he pursued, ' and they want you at once.'

I left for home the same afternoon, every incident of which remains distinct to this day. I remember the dread of meeting my mother and finding her unhappy ; and I recollect how serene the house looked that spring day, and how impossible to reconcile with the heavy hearts within. My mother met me in the hall, and for the first time there was no transport of delight over the son's return. She told me that my father was a little better, but that he was still desperately ill from his stroke.

I went into the dining-room and found Dr. Martin, our country doctor from Crawley, standing before the fire, hands-to-back as was his wont. He came forward and took my hand in both of his saying ' Pooh, Boy. Pooh ! Oliver,' with a kind of soothing

sibilant intake of breath with which we young patients of his were very familiar.

Then he sent me upstairs to join my sisters, and I crept past the door of the room where my father lay ill in a house now of silence and hushed counsels. Presently Dr. Martin followed with the specialist from town, and the two medicos vanished into the sick chamber.

We gathered in a room near by and waited, powerless somehow to while away the time for our mother by making conversation. Her anxiety was sad. She could not rest but must jump up and walk to the window and sit down, and jump up afresh many times ; and now and again she would half-kneel against the sofa and offer up, as we knew, little secret prayers for a good report from the doctors. But half an hour passed and not a sound. 'I know they must be finished,' she sighed. 'I know it. They can only be talking now about their own affairs' ; and she crossed the passage in her stress of mind and did that which, dear mother, she had always told us not to do. She went on her knees at the door of the ante-room and listened—in the hope of catching some syllable of comfort from within.

When at length the two doctors appeared, she could not control herself, but must vehemently plead for news, good news ; and getting only guarded, neutral replies she must persist with leading questions until at last some hopeful answer is wrung out and her innate optimism can tower again. In the atmosphere of which revived spirits, it was decided that I should return to school. But before leaving I might pay a short visit to my father.

They led me into the ante-room and I waited there, talking in an undertone to one of the nurses and wondering what the strange, pungent smell of india-rubber could mean. Then the other nurse appeared beckoning mutely from the doorway, and on tiptoe I stole into the darkened sick room ; and there he lay in bed the same dear father, only—suddenly so old and peaked. Somehow I dared not bend over him. So instead, keeping my breath, I slipped down on to my knees at the bedside and took hold of his hand with its tapering fingers all gone now to veins.

'Papa,' I whispered, leaning forward in a sort of hopelessness of pity and contrition ; 'I will read "Tintern Abbey" ! Oh ! I promise, I promise I will !'

And he turned his head and smiled ever so gently.

'Never mind, now, little dog,' he said, 'never mind.'

That was all. I never saw my father again.

I got back to school and reported late the following morning to my tutor. He seemed *distrail* and bade me stand aside until he was alone. Then he turned his head away and asked me: 'How did you leave your father?'

'Much better,' I replied, 'in fact——' and I started with all my mother's hopefulness to depict the prospects. But he cut me short with such a steady look and his hand on my shoulder.

'Oliver,' he said, 'your father died this morning. I have just had a telegram.'

The sense of sudden loneliness was overwhelming, and oh! so new the waking-up next morning, fatherless—fatherless for the first time. I took train for Rowfant early and walked through woods where the trees were beginning to 'stand in a mist of green,' and over fresh fields to the dear familiar home. There seemed no change in its wise grey walls, only the windows of his bedroom, which had been wide open before, had their blinds drawn now—as if they, too, were closed in death.

My sisters met me in the hall, and the black of their dresses made me gulp as I kissed them. Then my little sister took my hand in silence and led me off to the corridors where we romped so often. We halted at the little passage leading to the 'Strong Room.' The door was shut, and somehow we could not go by it. Instead we mounted the stairs, and with hushed footfalls stole past the room where he lay for ever silent.

Then we sat on the three stairs down which we used to jump, and in undertones she talked, and told me of the end, and spoke—as a child, eagerly—of strange unheard-of things concerning the dead.

In his will my father had expressed a desire to be buried with the poor and by the poor, and from the same three stairs two days later we watched six of the estate men come up to carry him away. I stood holding my little sister's hand tight, tight; and I remember the concentration of her small face, dusky as a gipsy's in its setting of dark curls and crêpe. One of the bearers, Jerry Payne, a favourite labourer, was wearing a short, incongruously light-blue coat, the best mourning he could muster, and I can hear the chastened clatter of their hob-nailed heels as they crossed the uncovered boarding to my father's room. They seemed gone very long, and then a voice sounded within giving soft directions, and they lurched out with their burden and staggered down the stairs. They were

taking him from us for ever! He would never come back to Rowfant again!

There is only this left to tell. It is said that Petrarch died with his head on a book. My father died with one in his hands. For upon the last day he called for his 'Confidences,' to him the fondest of folios, and feebly with a pencil he wrought his last improvement in the tangled text. It was a message of love to my mother, as well as a footnote to the page, and it was scarce legible, so faint were the characters. They seemed to struggle shakily to be heard. Yet they sounded firmly and harmoniously the knell of a life which was humbly whole in its waking and sleeping. 'Even as a matter of art' it was well so to end.

'DODA'S BIRTHDAY.'

A FORGOTTEN CHILD'S BOOK.

THE world in which children live is as unknown a country to most of us as the continents of Mars. For one thing the majority of people have short memories and, when once their own romantic world has faded into the light of common day, its features and characters merely appear to them in a golden haze. For another, it is only now and again that a *vates sacer* arises to rescue some of its outlines from oblivion. There are not many Daisy Ashfords to set down for us their *joie de vivre* whilst still they are inhabitants of the enchanted land. There are not many R. L. Stevensons who have not only the power which Stevenson tells us he possessed of remembering the small details of his childhood long years afterwards, but also of making them live for us as he does in 'A Child's Garden of Verses.'

It was in 1865 that the greatest of children's books first saw the light, for 'Alice in Wonderland' was published in that year—the greatest, unless indeed 'Through the Looking-Glass' may not be held to excel it. It was probably a few years later that the forgotten child's book was issued, the title of which stands at the head of this paper.

The story was immediately acclaimed by one family of children at any rate as the work of an initiate, nor has the lapse of nearly half a century altered their verdict in the smallest degree—a verdict which a fresh generation endorses with the same warmth as they originally felt. Yet in spite of persistent inquiry no other family has yet been discovered which has ever heard of it. One wonders whether it may be possible to convey any of its attraction to a wider circle of readers. For it is a tale which, like the two 'Alices' and the 'Water Babies,' ought to make an appeal to children of every age.

It is called 'Doda's Birthday; the faithful record of all that befel a little girl on a long eventful day.' The author's name is given as Edwin J. Ellis, and it was published by Marcus Ward & Co. There is no date, but internal evidence seems to suggest a year somewhere in the early 'seventies. The coloured frontispiece shows a little girl with golden hair, dressed in a lilac taffeta frock, which has flounces edged with cherry-coloured ribbon, with which

also her billowy white sleeves are confined at various points. An odd little flat hat has half slipped off her head, but is retained by some more cherry ribbons, which are tied under her small round chin in a big bow. She is lying daintily asleep on a bench in an old-fashioned cottage garden, with her head resting on an old woman's shoulder, who has a sad and intelligent face and wears a white mob cap and apron and a dark dress, and is reading aloud from a well-bound red book. The opposite page bears the legend 'Doda's Birthday' upon an ecclesiastical-looking pink scroll, on which two robins are perched. Their nest is just above their heads on a thorny stem of may, which has the singular property of bearing not only red and white flowers, but has also surprisingly blossomed into very blue periwinkles and forget-me-nots, and very white wood anemones and snowdrops. The frontispiece and title-page take you at once into the atmosphere of the mid-Victorian era.

The characters are all of them drawn with a delightful touch. Doda herself is a little girl of seven. She is a child who has the magic power of penetrating the reserve of grown-up people and making them talk to her intelligently. She has no father and no brothers and sisters, and lives with her mother and grandfather. Her mother

'was not like other people's mothers, but was very clever and very fond of science, and used to read and write a great deal, and sometimes wrote a real book, and had a collection of curious things, and often went to London to hear lectures. Besides which she was tall, and had a very distinct side-face; and, though she was not young, was never tired, and always busy.'

Her grandfather was 'tall and beautiful, with white hair, but no beard'—a cultivated and leisured old-fashioned country gentleman of literary tastes. It is from him that Doda derives her social aptitudes, not from her mother, who lives entirely for the things of the mind, abstracted from the doings of every day and particularly from those of her daughter.

'Her mother,' we are told, 'had three Shakespeares and her grandfather five; and Doda used to try to read them, but never got very far, and could never find the place again. She knew "Hamlet" was there and her mother used sometimes to say that "Hamlet was mad"; and her grandfather would answer, "You mean Lear, yes"; and then her mother would frown, and look uncomfortable, and go away.'

Doda, like Maisie in that ambiguous world which Henry James built up round her, lives amongst her elders, and, like Maisie, is always seeing glimpses through half-opened doors, some of which—though not all of them, as in Maisie's case—are cupboard doors which seem to have a skeleton inside. But Maisie is imprisoned, a forlorn little Ariadne without a clue, in a labyrinthine world whose threatening and convoluted walls seem always ready to close upon her, and where minotaurs lurk round every corner. Doda, on the other hand, is set down in pleasant English country society. It would be absurd to compare an unpretending story like 'Doda's Birthday' with the work of the famous dissector of our social organism. The *motif*, however, is the same in each—the reaction of the world of grown-up people upon a little girl's consciousness. But 'Doda's Birthday' purports to be a faithful record of an actual experience, and it is this no doubt which helps to give it a great part of its convincing naturalness, whereas Henry James, after making a microscopic cross-section through a child's imagined environment and focussing all his highest powers of super-subtle analysis upon it, leaves us straining our sight at something which is so scientifically true to life as almost to cease to be lifelike.

But all this sounds rather elaborate talk about what is after all a very simple story. Let us proceed to give some further account of it.

The other *dramatis personæ* are, first of all, Mr. Mills, an old gentleman who lives next door and is a scholar and a writer. Not far off are Colonel and Mrs. Thoseby. Colonel Thoseby had once perpetrated a little volume of poems when he was a subaltern, in which 'the serious ones were like Mrs. Hemans, and the exciting ones like Scott and Lord Macaulay, and one was even like Pope, and the worst of all, and was called "To the Imagination."' He has now settled down in the country and is much occupied with his militia. Mrs. Thoseby is 'tall and dark and beautiful, with nice dark hair, and had always a nice dress that looked as if she would never look better in any other,' and she plays charmingly. Then there are Essy Fairtop, who is a pretty society butterfly and an heiress, whom Mrs. Thoseby describes as having 'been to school in France and to holiday in a novel,' and Captain Lewis, who is in love with her. Mrs. Mortlake, Mrs. Thoseby's mother, lives with her daughter. She is like Mrs. Thoseby, 'but with a prettier complexion and smaller lips. Her face is like that of a fair, sad child, with dark hair, more delicate in complexion but fatter and more

handsome than most other children.' In a cottage in the village is old Mrs. Deylon, a curate's daughter who has lost all her money and now lives with her grandson who is gardener to Doda's grandfather. Then at the end of the village is Lord Welryth's park and house, where that attractive and eccentric nobleman lives with his sister Lady Ethel.

As our little seven-year-old Pippa passes through the hours of her birthday, we are made to see each of these people very plainly through her eyes, and though she has no such high function as to deflect the course of their lives by her contact with them, they most of them, to a greater or less extent, are led to reveal their foibles and characteristics to her keen little sight.

Doda wakes up very early on the morning of her seventh birthday, because she had left her blind up so as to begin her birthday as soon as it was light. It was summer-time 'when the days begin long before anyone is ready for them.' She determines to get up and dress herself without help. Having succeeded in doing so she runs downstairs and out through the garden to a little wood where

'the roots were all in queer shapes, twisted about everywhere as if the trees had been dancing all night, and had stopped suddenly to listen to the sunrise and never moved again; and the earth was all in queer shapes too, like as the bed-clothes are when one has been dancing on the bed.'

Is not that exactly a child's reading of earth? Or this of a hothouse, into which her friend the gardener presently took her

'and then did strange things with the queer-shaped flowers there, that are so soft and thick, and have such soft thick stalks, and smell so differently to all the others that grow out of doors, so that when one comes away into the open air their scent seems like a dream, but if one goes back, there it is, exactly as it was before.'

Doda is possessed with the idea that something important is going to happen to her on her birthday, and the first thing that does happen is that the atmosphere of the hothouse before breakfast makes her faint. She sees the gardener

'throw down a pot of flowers that he had in his hand and begin to run towards her. But though he was not very far off, and was always running, the distance got further and further, and he never seemed to get any nearer.'

The rest of her sensations are equally well described. She recovers to find herself on the lawn, being fed by the gardener with strawberries, after which she feels quite well again and runs into the house, where she meets her grandfather coming downstairs, who 'knows how to give a birthday present,' for while he is hugging her he throws a gold chain round her neck 'with a locket like a pulley at the end,' which has a gleaming white wave of his hair curled round inside it.

'You will always keep this,' says her grandfather, 'and perhaps I may disappear.'

'Oh, no!' answers Doda, 'Why, you are always here, even when Mamma is away at lectures.'

'Well, I will be here as always as I can,' says he, 'but people with white hair and grand-daughters are very movable, though they generally stay in one place. But in the meantime,' he adds 'this doesn't matter, and you must grow up. I think that locket will help you, for it is quite a grown-up locket.'

Breakfast follows. The epoch-making experience of a real grown-up fainting fit has in itself made her feel older already. At breakfast she keeps her eye on her mother, who disapproves of birthday presents, though it is always tacitly understood that she has a share in those which come from Doda's grandfather. At last her mother notices the locket and remarks :

"'Very handsome indeed!—very nice! I never wear lockets.' And then Doda understood that the subject was finished and they went on with their breakfast as usual, and her grandfather and mother both looked at the newspaper as they were accustomed to do, offered it to each other and then dropped it on a chair and forgot it.'

Doda is given leave to do whatever she likes all day long. Armed with this permission she determines to sally out into her little world and look for adventures—the form of adventure which appeals to her being to take a series of voyages of discovery into the lives of grown-up people and make them understand how old she feels.

She decides to begin with Mr. Mills, because he had always listened to her and never sent her away. So she rings at his bell and is shown by the man-servant into the library, the door of which he 'opened quietly, but very suddenly and very wide, as if he had someone he wanted to hurt and thought they might be behind it.'

Mr. Mills is sitting at a table 'covered with almost as many books and pieces of paper as her mother used.' When he sees Doda he swings round in his chair and welcomes her, 'and his eyes seemed to look straight in through hers, and to see everything she was, and to like to see it, and to like her for it.'

Doda is very anxious to discuss the subject of age with him, but as she stands by his knee she begins to feel rather young again and does not know how to begin. At last she says :

'It's my birthday,' and Mr. Mills wishes her many happy returns of the day and says 'I must never forget the day,' and writes 'Doda's Birthday' on his calendar. But Doda feels that this is not at all what she meant to say, and besides that it is too much to make Mr. Mills always think about her birthday. But to her delight he says as he puts back the calendar, 'How old you must feel !' 'I knew you would know,' she cries, 'but why don't the others ? Grandpapa does, perhaps, but Mamma doesn't ; and your servant didn't at all understand, and looked quite stupid when I asked if you were in.'

They are now launched into the absorbing topic, and Mr. Mills explains to her that you are just as old as you feel. She thinks he must feel very old indeed. But he tells her that when she came in he was reading the 'Symposium,' and that the people in it were large and young and strong and brown with living in the sun which always shines in Greece, 'or always seems to do when one reads about it,' and that he was feeling like one of them and *was* one of them, and laughed when they laughed, and was strong because they were strong. That was how he felt when she came in. And he shows her a picture of a young Greek.

'But,' says Doda, 'your hair is like grandpapa's, and you are like—not the least like this. How could I tell ?'

'But,' replies Mr. Mills, 'I don't feel my white hair inside. I feel myself inside ; and one's self is like whatever one thinks of. And therefore mine is as happy as the day is long.'

Doda wonders very much at this, because she had so often heard people call him 'poor Mr. Mills,' and has to make a great effort to prevent herself asking him what it means, and the effort makes her feel very uncomfortable and prevents her saying anything else.

At last she looks up at him and sees that he knows all that she has been thinking, and knows quite well that they call him 'poor Mr. Mills,' and even knows how nearly she had asked him about it, but how it would not do at all if she did.'

However she forgets all this upon Mr. Mills saying that he would like to give her something nice for her birthday, only he is afraid he has nothing, especially in that room, that she would like to have. 'What do you think?' he asks.

What Doda thought was, 'I like you, and I don't understand the other things,' and wants to tell him this, but does not dare to say it out loud. But she is determined to say it because she reflects that she may never have another chance if she misses this, so at last she begins to try, but in her fright begins at the wrong end, and says 'I don't care for anything in this room—,' and feels that that is quite wrong, so thinks she will add 'except you,' but can only get out 'except.' Then she sees he knows what she was going to say, so that indeed she need not say it at all, which made it quite easy, and she said 'except you' without any trouble.

So Mr. Mills says he ought to give her himself, and will as much as he can, and they strike up an alliance, because they both now understand how old and how young they each of them are. He says she is to come and see him when it is a fine day and they can tell each other how fine it is, or when she has something to tell him which is too old for the others to understand. And when her birthdays come as close together as his do he will come and see her on all her birthdays because he is turning into books very fast now, and will quite have turned into them by that time. And with that she says good-bye.

She next takes a plunge from philosophy into society in the shape of a luncheon-party at Colonel and Mrs. Thoseby's. Here she finds Mrs. Mortlake and Essy and Captain Lewis and a number of other people. Doda is fascinated by Essy and her skill in taking off her gloves, 'and in keeping them, and her handkerchief and her fan, and a little bottle with a gold stopper, and her little parasol, all in her lap at the same time, without letting any of them fall, or appearing to have too many things.' And besides, 'her dress was the prettiest, and her hair the most woven and entwined, and designed and refined,' that she had ever seen in all her life.

Mrs. Mortlake sometimes shuts her eyes while eating, which she does 'very slowly and nicely.' Doda's observant eye notices that she only takes preserve and sponge cake, and afterwards strawberries and cream, which is why, she thinks, she looks 'so like a child, only fatter and handsomer.' During luncheon 'she never raised her eyes, and was gentle and majestic, but spoke to no one.' When she does speak—as Doda is having some cake

before she goes home and throws a piece up for her big dog Nero to catch—the old *gourmet* deprives her of breath and speech by saying in a low but very clear and alarming voice :

'Doda ! that dog is a great deal too large to be allowed to have cake . . . Do you know that many poor people would be glad of that piece you are wasting now ? How dare you ?'

Colonel Thoseby has just come in from a review of the militia, and tells the company that his men were 'Trojans.' Doda feels very much puzzled by the word, and on noticing her expression Colonel Thoseby passes her the mustard—which was not at all what she wanted. She thinks she will ask him to explain, and says to him :

'What are Trojans ?'

'Trojans ?' says Colonel Thoseby, more surprised than she was, 'Trojans ? People in Homer—that is, in a book—who were heroes, and so forth. They fought the Greeks, and so forth. Is that right, Essy ? I believe you know more about it than I do.'

'Oh, Colonel Thoseby,' cried Essy, 'I never learned Greek. How could you say such a thing ? I am not a radical you know, and I don't understand anything. Now, *do I* ?'

Doda thinks it very funny that anyone should feel like that, and as she looks at Colonel Thoseby's immense grey moustache she wonders if *he* feels it inside, or whether he is like Mr. Mills, and feels like the Greeks. She asks him, and explains what Mr. Mills has told her about them. Colonel Thoseby replies that Mr. Mills is a very clever man and has—'well ; he has imagination, which we grown-up people very seldom keep, and I am afraid,' he adds, 'I lost mine long ago.' And he becomes grave and refuses to be cheered, in spite of Essy telling him that they are all quite frightened at his cleverness, because he is thinking of the poetry he wrote when he was a young man.

After luncheon Mrs. Thoseby takes Doda for a drive with her pair of ponies. As they drive the story of 'Red Riding Hood' comes up and Doda unburdens her soul of the terrors which that awful legend has for her. Mrs. Thoseby expounds it as an allegory and succeeds in dispelling most of the terrors, but leaves Doda with the sobering conviction that there is a wolf in everyone's story. The real reason, she tells Doda, why they made up the story, was 'for children to have instead of newspapers, because it is very awful ; but it isn't true, and yet there is a wolf, so they have their

little fright all for nothing, and no one is hurt after all.' People who *like* 'Red Riding Hood' as children, like reading the newspapers when they grow up—a particular part of the newspaper, explains Mrs. Thoseby, 'about nothing but horrid things, much worse than "Red Riding Hood," ever so much worse, and sometimes quite true, and not "once upon a time," but really yesterday.'

'What sort of things?' asks Doda.

'Oh,' says Mrs. Thoseby, 'horrid things.'

'Fires with conflagration and great loss of life?' asks Doda.

'Yes,' answers Mrs. Thoseby astonished. 'How did you know?'

'And murders, with atrocious something, and trials, and adjournments?' went on Doda.

'Yes; how *can* you know?' said Mrs. Thoseby.

'Why, that is what grandpapa tells mamma she has to breakfast instead of treacle,' is Doda's unexpected answer, which causes Mrs. Thoseby to drop her whip and stop the ponies for Doda to pick it up in order to hide her amusement.

It is now afternoon, and when Mrs. Thoseby presently sets her down, Doda wanders through the village till she sees an old woman sitting in a tidy little garden full of flowers. Her face attracts her, though she does not know who she is, and she decides to pay her a call. Her instinct is a sound one, for she finds a fresh opportunity for philosophic reflections in the course of her visit. The old lady is Mrs. Deylon, and though Doda does not know her, she finds to her surprise that Mrs. Deylon knows her quite well, and she is astonished to find that she is the mother of her friend the gardener. Finding a sympathetic listener in Doda, Mrs. Deylon tells the story of her life—a story with a wolf in it, reflects Doda as she hears it, and feels saddened. However, Mrs. Deylon appears to be quite as happy as Mr. Mills, and to Doda's great delight she finds that when she came in Mrs. Deylon was actually reading one of Mr. Mills' books. She insists on having some read to her. It is a book of Essays, and the one Mrs. Deylon reads to her is about the four stages of life, in each of which a man thinks most of what he *does*, or *feels*, or *is*, or *thinks*. The essay, combined with the heat of the afternoon, proves too much even for such an ardent dialectician as Doda, and she falls asleep with her head on the old lady's shoulder. But the four stages continue to haunt her dreams and she wakes up with her mind still full of them. She is anxious to think them over by herself, so bids good-bye to the old lady and

strolls off to find further adventures before her birthday comes to an end.

Continuing her walk she presently arrives at the lodge gates Lord Welryth's park, and with birthday-begotten boldness decides to go in and call on him, after learning from the girl at the lodge that 'they' are out and only Lord Welryth himself at home. But a horrid doubt gives her pause. Suppose she has grown up so much that Lord Welryth does not know her; or suppose he is different and she does not know him? While she is pondering this dilemma Mrs. Thoseby's ponies appear once more, and on hearing what Doda has in her mind Mrs. Thoseby tells her to jump in with her again because she is just going to call on Lord Welryth herself.

Lord Welryth is a man of artistic tastes who dabbles in literature and music and pictures, but has frittered away his talents. He is full of humour and mischief and is a source of painful anxiety to his conventional sister Lady Ethel.

As they drive up the park Mrs. Thoseby warns Doda that she must not let her thirst for information lead her to ask Lord Welryth to explain what he says, because he will say a great many things to her that she will not understand, on purpose for her not quite to understand them. They come upon Lord Welryth in the garden in front of the house as they drive up, and to her relief Doda recognises him directly. What she sees is 'a tall old man, almost as tall as her grandfather, and more upright. He walked quickly and easily, and when Doda looked at his face she could hardly help laughing, for his eyes twinkled with amusement, and his long, queer mouth that had such a funny, mischievous shape, looked as if it could scarcely help talking from morning to night about all the queer things it knew and wanted to laugh at. He had short, light-grey whiskers and short hair, and a long face, very wide at the top, but pointed at the chin, and altogether like a kite, only that it had such funny eyes, and such a funny mouth, and such a hooked nose.'

'He really is *not*,' Lord Welryth began in a loud, comfortable voice before he got up to them. Then he went on, taking Mrs. Thoseby's hand:

'No, my dearest friend, he really is *not* here, upon my sacred honour and that of all my fathers. I know whom you have come to look for. Why did you not come yesterday, or on Sunday morning, or on Wednesday night, or on Tuesday afternoon? He was here then.'

'I have not come to look for Colonel Thoseby,' Mrs. Thoseby began, as they shook hands, laughing.

'What! will you try subtilties with me?' said Lord Welryth, stepping back. 'Totally useless; absolutely profitless. I haven't got him. Now you don't believe me.' He turned away. 'But you may look,' said he, coming back suddenly, 'you may search. My house, my garden, my desk, my piano, my pockets, and my park shall never be closed to you. Wander about freely, and conjure for Colonel Thoseby. If you find half a spur——'

'But really, Lord Welryth,' said Mrs. Thoseby, interrupting him in despair, 'upon *my* honour I did not come to look for anyone but you. Colonel Thoseby is with his militia.'

'I forgive his militia,' said Lord Welryth kindly, just as if they were somewhere out of sight, but close by, among the bushes, where they could hear him.

Lord Welryth is in a thoroughly irresponsible mood, and seeing that Doda is fascinated as they pass through the hall by the sight of an enormous stuffed pike in a glass case, he hastens to explain to her that it is a family portrait.

'We have many family portraits,' he goes on, 'each like a particular member of the family, and which the housekeeper describes. This one is more or less like all the family, and the housekeeper would be quite at a loss to describe it. I may add,' he concludes, 'that I myself am the first of my race to show no personal resemblance to it.'

Lord Welryth carries them off to his own room, which is like a church, because it is very long and high, and has an organ in it, and besides a little fiddle and a very big fiddle; and like a library, because it has a great many books and pictures and pens and papers and portfolios; and like a dining-room, because it has a long table; and like a drawing-room, because it has a round seat in the middle with a little column of cushions for people to lean their backs against as they sit all round, and little tables and chairs.

Doda is quite overwhelmed with everything and exclaims in despair 'How busy you must always be here!' at which Lord Welryth laughed so much that he was obliged to hold for a moment the back of a big chair. Suddenly he became perfectly grave, and said 'That is the bitterest reproach I ever received in my life.' Then he too begins to talk about himself and in a half-whimsical, half-pathetic way tells her that he has all his life been very busy being idle, and has succeeded in doing nearly two-thirds of

everything. Suddenly he breaks off and sits down at his organ and begins to play a fugue, 'and a great tune came out and rushed about the room, and shook the windows and made the air rebound. And Doda's heart beat; and she felt herself carried about and flung to and fro by five strong dreams at once, and to be at ease and quite natural, and not forced against her will.' But they hear the noise of carriage wheels outside and Lord Welryth stops so abruptly 'that the organ, and all the wood, and pedals, and rods, rattled as they were checked,' and swinging round on his seat he says to Mrs. Thoseby 'Even my fugue, you see, has only two-thirds of a life. Let us go and be decorous.'

While they are all having tea in the drawing-room Lord Welryth declares, in spite of the whispered remonstrances of his sister Lady Ethel, that he is going to have an impromptu dinner party that evening for Doda, the qualification for an invitation to which is to be that each of the guests must have explained something to her. Colonel and Mrs. Thoseby and Essy, who are all there, qualify at once, and Mr. Mills is to be invited and Doda's grandfather, who was an old school-fellow of Lord Welryth's, and, as Doda presently finds, as full of mischief as he is, and also her mother, in spite of Lady Ethel's attempts to impress on her brother that the grandfather is all very well, but that 'the other side' is a different matter.

After tea Doda drives home again with Colonel and Mrs. Thoseby in the carriage, where she finds a hard thing behind her which runs into her back. It turns out to be a *catalogue raisonné* of part of Lord Welryth's library with the title 'Numbers of the Dissolving Books.' Colonel Thoseby explains to Doda that in the catalogue Lord Welryth has put down what his books seemed like to him as he was growing up, and read again at one age the books that he used to read at another age. Doda is delighted at Colonel Thoseby's realising that she can understand a proper explanation, because Colonel Thoseby was a man who 'used always to speak of people more by describing the things they did not understand than by any other quality about them. He used to describe new friends who were going to come to the house as "a man who did not understand military matters," or "who did not understand horses," or "gardening," or "politics," or whatever else he was not to be talked to about too much when he came.'

Lord Welryth has made a catalogue of part of his library in which all the books are labelled '7...70,' because he says that

the print of these particular books gradually gets greyer and greyer each year after you are seven, and at last the pages are perfectly blank for many years, until when you get to seventy the print leaps to life again. His lordship's theory of Dissolving Books deserves to become classical.

As Doda is dressing for her dinner-party she hears her grandfather say to her mother 'Certainly, dress as well as you can: it shows talent. Emerson remarks of the English people that it is astonishing how much talent goes into manners. Dress is a part of manners.' For her talented mother is very characteristically worrying herself over how she will look in a cap. She hated going out, 'but then grandpapa was always there, and he always knew the right thing to say, for he had been brought up with Lord Welryth, and could get in and out of every dilemma that the most unskilful talker could get him or anyone else into.' And this dinner 'will be a very nice thing for Doda, and besides, Lord Welryth is different.'

The dinner party goes off with great *éclat*. Captain Lewis is reminded that he has not qualified for an invitation because he has not explained anything to Doda, who says that she does not know of anything that wants explaining. 'Then I will explain that,' replies Captain Lewis; 'you have just dined with Lord Welryth. No one who has just done so ever wanted anything explaining.' Doda has her health drunk and is carried off to the drawing-room with the ladies.

Here Essy is asked by Lady Ethel if they may not have *one* song and Doda curls herself up on an ottoman to listen. Essy 'sang on and on. She sang that she was a bird, that she was blind, that the people she liked best were dead, that the person she liked better still was alive, and much else, chiefly about herself. . . . She also sang in unknown languages, but probably still about what she was,' till Doda fell fast asleep and was awakened by the rattle of teacups to find that the men, who she thought had been hiding, had come into the drawing-room.

Lord Welryth remembers that he has not given her a present, and when he asks her what she would like, she chooses a book. 'A Dissolving Book' puts in Colonel Thoseby, which makes Lord Welryth blush, but 'finding by looking out of the sides and back of his head, shutting his eyes nearly to do so, that Mrs. Mortlake was not attending, nor Doda's mother, nor his sister' he carries her off again to his room. He will not give her Chaucer, or Spenser,

or Shelley, or Keats—a time will come for them. As for Thomson's 'Seasons,' and 'Polyolbion,' and Young's 'Night Thoughts,' and Cowper's 'Task'—he feels sure that she will be safe under her grandfather's protection from those 'works of good, industrious, second-rate nuisances, that make us stupid before our time.' It must, he decides, obviously be Shakespeare, and he takes down a reprint of one of the folios and writes her name and his own in it, and they go back to the drawing-room, Doda hugging her treasure to her heart.

They find Essy now playing nothing particular, but when Captain Lewis puts a song on the stand 'she makes the nothing particular she was playing change into the part at the first page of the song before the words' and proceeds to sing again. Captain Lewis then persuades Doda to play to him, and she puts her Shakespeare on the music stool and sits down on the top of it at the piano, feeling very shy. But she thinks of a tune she knows by heart and feels that she cannot help playing it now she is at the piano.

'The notes seemed to cry out to be played; so she plunged into the tune and let it play itself. The piano seemed twice as loud as the one at home, and as big and strong as their great carriage; but it was easy to play on, and made all the tunes sound more like tunes than they did on any other piano.'

As she drives home Doda has one more adventure and a sufficiently startling one, for the horse is frightened by some gipsy boys who are whirling lighted sticks in the road, and runs away, and finally the carriage overturns in a hayfield. The shafts snap off, and Doda and her mother and grandfather and Mr. Mills find themselves in a struggling heap inside. The coachman opens the door and the big dog Nero jumps in on the top of them and tries to dig them out. None of them are much hurt and the coachman explains how he put the horse at a gap in the hedge 'so we let ourselves down pretty softly at the end. I thought,' he adds, 'we was all going the wrong way, though, for I never was so near an accident, not in all my life.'

And lo and behold! the hayfield turns out to be their own hayfield, and Doda runs into the house and is soon in bed, with her precious folio Shakespeare thrust under her pillow, saying to herself as she closes her eyes, 'Not another birthday for a year, and not another ever the same as this.'

It is hard to tell whether this little tale, if it were ever republished, could appeal to the present generation. The many children who are growing up—so one who ought to know sorrowfully declared the other day—in ignorance of the very existence of the White Knight and the Duchess, would doubtless turn up their over-educated noses at Doda. One has small confidence in an age which has divorced John Tenniel from Lewis Carroll and thinks it can illustrate 'Alice' better itself. People who do that would probably indulge in ribaldry about the lions in Trafalgar Square and wish to put a new tune to 'God Save the King.' Yet one cannot but think that there is a sane remnant, both of children and of grown-up people too, who would like to hear more about Lord Welryth and his views on ghosts, and of how he owed his life to the highly convenient fact that he had two backs to his head, and to read the adventures of the stuffed pike, and to make fuller acquaintance with Doda herself. Proper children of all ages between seven and seventy must surely enjoy it. Lord Welryth at any rate, if he survived to add a copy to his library, has certainly not put it into the bookcase which contains the Dissolving Books.

F. G. ELLERTON.

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THE PROVOCATOR.

BY CAPT. W. L. BLENNERHASSETT, D.S.O.

CHAPTER I.

ST. PETERSBURG! The train was steadily approaching the city, and the renegade priest, drawing near the end of his sudden flight, that January afternoon in 1904, was filled with undefined excitement. Unlettered as many of his kind, he was indeed scarcely removed above the ignorance and crudeness of his fellow-villagers in that tiny hamlet of Piatelnovolok where he had officiated for the last five years—a tiny hamlet lost out of sight and out of mind in the Arctic wastes of Carelia far to the north of the capital, cut off by the great lakes, approached by no railway within a hundred miles, so remote indeed that up till then no news had reached it of a war with Japan, much less of the Russian disasters or of the great revolution these disasters were now provoking.

Yet to his little flock he had been the channel of the divine—he, the unlettered priest, at once mystic and materialist, upheld by the belief in his religion, that blend of unquestioning faith, of ecstatic devotion and unenlightened formalism, which is the strength and the weakness of Russian orthodoxy.

And yet, in that remote place, his living faith had been shattered. All unconsciously he had been tainted with the heresy of the Old Believers. He had married into a family who secretly adhered to this sect of simpler faith and ritual, so abhorred by the Orthodox. He had been lax in disciplining the suspects so near to him. Death had carried off his wife, whom he had treated much after the rough customs of the peasants, and spiritual comfort had only come through the tender ministrations of her young sister, Maroussia—a soul too fine for village comprehension.

Insistent memory recalled how, suddenly, on the very feast day of Christmas, the village whispers had broken out in loud indignation. What manner of priest was he to palter with heresy for the sake of a heretic girl? No priest, but a heretic himself, to be execrated and banned. At the word his sleeping conscience awoke; he stood revealed to himself. There was no defence; in his heart of hearts he realised it was true. The potency of his unquestioning faith in the claims of his priesthood and the forms of his Church

had shrivelled up before the 'heretics' purer and simpler ideals of faith and life.

Memory could not be stilled. He had sinned indeed, not as the villagers thought, but against his old faith, against his early vows. He was cut off from the familiar channel of intercourse with the divine. As a priest he had ever felt himself united with the Christ. Now he was an apostate, an outcast, perhaps a follower of the Antichrist.

Flight! That had been imperative. He could stay no longer to betray his office, to forswear himself, to lead astray the one fine soul that, too late, he knew he had loved. Flight! Whither but to St. Petersburg, the symbol of Russia's rebirth among the nations, the centre of untold possibilities for a new life; the home, too, of a man who could tell him what to do in this unfamiliar world—Andrei Alexandrovich Godalitski, a distant cousin of his, whose successful career as a railway official had become a legend in his native village.

Flight, then, before the Holy Synod could learn of his apostasy and arrest him! On foot through the forest tracks or helped by a friendly lift in a sledge along the highroad, uncounted miles across the snow, alone with his thoughts, or playing a hateful part of falsehood in the houses that sheltered him as he traversed those uncounted miles to the nearest point on the railway.

But memory called up one gleam of light. As he made his painful way southwards the spiritual turmoil within him had gradually fought itself out. Had he really done wrong? He had not led any living soul astray. But his faith was gone. His old thoughts were false: he must go forth to seek for the truth. His trials, his sufferings, the death of his nearest and dearest—these had been but the result of an inexorable fate—of fate, the word so dear to the semi-Asiatic outlook of the Russian, as great a comforter to the Slav as Kismet to the Mahommedan. Fate!—the word reverberated through the soul of Gregory Dimitrievich Kossalnikov, known in religion as Father Seraphim. The words of the Scripture sprang to his mind. As it was, so it had to be, so it had been decreed for all time by Him who could declare 'Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.'

With this, at last his struggle had ended. He used the holy words, and they had brought him not fear, but joy as of old. His eyes had been kindled anew with their old light—the light of faith which the persecution of men had quenched. He had no need

now of the Old Believers, nor even of the Church which he had forsaken : he needed only himself. For the first time in his life he believed in himself, had faith in his own person. Sinner though he knew himself to be, it was to seek, to find, and to know the truth that he was going forth into the world. How could even a priest correct evil and sin if he did not understand—if he deliberately held aloof from—the developments of the day ? Formerly he had believed that man knew the truth only in death. Now an inner voice told him that—perhaps—he might find it in life.

Thus the journey had lost its terror. Gregory made light of the formidable obstacles of nature, and lighter still of the charity of his fellow-men that would sometimes help him on his way. He went on alone, lost in prayer and meditation.

And then the first touch of the strange realities which were now sweeping him along—realities so inconceivable to his narrow comprehension as to be meaningless, unreal—a senseless dream to which a clue came later by degrees. In a little village not far from the railway he had stumbled unawares upon strange happenings. Too innocent to imagine any harm in these armed men who had seized the place, he entered the inn and found himself, to his bewilderment, a suspect because a priest, and in as much jeopardy as the unfortunate innkeeper who was already tied up. He heard the strange word Revolution for the first time. What did it mean ? In a lull of the excitement a good-natured young woman, one of the revolutionary leaders, sent the prisoners out of the village. Gregory pursued his way alone, and puzzled, to the railway junction.

Again the shadow of that mysterious revolution. The railway was disorganised. There had been importunate days of waiting and questioning, and again weary waiting till at length a train appeared bound for St. Petersburg. A strange experience, that, for the untravelled Gregory : day and night in the overcrowded fourth-class carriage, where he was lucky to find a place instead of having to crawl on to the roof. Wedged in his corner, he was unable to move or find sleep. Half dozing from sheer fatigue, he listened distractedly to the talk of a few stalwarts, their nerves impervious to exhaustion, who argued on and on, now at the top of their voices, now in undertones. For the first time he gathered that the war against Japan had actually been going on a full year ; that the Eastern dwarfs drove back the Slav giant ; that treason led to the fall of this fortress and the General Staff's champagne

suppers to the loss of that position. They spoke of men and places whose names he had never heard of; they spoke of armies in numbers he could not conceive. In his simple way he began to wonder how such numbers compared with the ten legions of angels Christ had told Pilate He could summon if He willed. This was the biggest host he knew of; though, if asked what a legion was, he could not have answered.

War and the triumph of evil—surely, he mused, the day must be at hand when Antichrist is born. Through all the centuries of the Christian era this thought had haunted the faithful, but nowhere with such intensity as in Russia. Men had seen Antichrist in Peter the Great, in the pseudo-Rurik and Romanov pretenders, in the alien Napoleon at the gates of Moscow. Each time the vision had proved false.

It came into his mind that this Antichrist was to be born on Christmas Day. This last Christmas was the very day of his own apostasy. It flashed upon him that this birth of Antichrist might be not a physical but a spiritual event—that a man should forsake his faith and, shaping himself anew as a leader of men against God, set forth to achieve the temporary triumphs appointed to the false Messiah.

Did he not know of just such a man who, that last Christmas Day, had abandoned his old faith and been born anew into a new life of overweening trust in self? Was not that man himself? Was he perhaps that Antichrist, arrayed like a false prophet in the garments of the holy office he had relinquished to turn against his God? What, indeed, had the great Lucifer done but to believe in himself in defiance of God? Then—was he—he—Antichrist?

He shuddered, he crossed himself, he tried to discover whether he had been asleep or not, he doubted his reason.

And again in undertones he heard the men's conversation. They were talking of the revolution now, of the mutinous regiments cowed by decimation, of the wholesale execution of recalcitrant railway personnel, of the roving peasant bands ransacking the country, of frantic crowds dispersed by the *nagaikas*—the long whips—of the mounted cossacks, by the bullets of the tsarist infantry. . . . They could not all be telling lies . . . or was he dreaming again in his little *izbá* near the church in the village where the best of his life had been spent?

Early next morning a strange passenger had shared his rye-bread with Gregory and procured him a glass of tea from water

boiled on the stove of the car. Falling into conversation, he discussed the inevitable subject—the revolution. His face sometimes wore a repellent expression, but, in marked contrast to the half-baked student who joined in from time to time with floods of frothy oratory and praises of atheism and the joy of living, he was well-informed, clear, interesting. He spared no details, down to the amazing mutiny of the Emperor's famous life-guards. Gregory's whole world was shaken. What could this desire for liberty be which made men rebel against the sacred authority of the Tsar? Had they not their rights . . .? But he was swept away in the revelation of rights denied, of riches misplaced, of education refused and religion crushing thought, of officials misusing the sacred authority of their Tsar, of greed and treachery in high places, of human aspirations repressed by terrorism, of 50,000 railwaymen hanged or shot in this one month.

Liberty meant emancipation, the end of terrorism and autocratic slave-driving, social reform, equalisation of wealth, universal education. In his student days, Gregory remembered, he had felt sympathy with many of these ideas. Had his outlook narrowed in the ardour of his early priesthood? Was it the fault of the religion he had left that his sympathies had so long been buried? He was moved and startled when the stranger uttered the very thought that now urged him on: If you deny what the people know to be facts, how will they obey you? If you do not go out and learn the developments of the time, how can you reform evil?

He looked up. The stranger seemed to scan his face with an air of being able to read his thoughts. He remarked laughingly 'You are a thoughtful man, Batoushka; never mind, we shall convert you yet.'

Convert him—to what?

The stranger again seemed to guess what was in his mind and observed casually: 'To a broader view of life; that is *all* I mean to do. Really, I believe you are not so narrow-minded as most—I mean, forgive me, of your—your . . .'

Gregory did not hear the end of the remark. There was a peculiar intonation in the word 'all.' What did he mean? Was he sincere, or did he imply that there was more to teach than a cleric could grasp? And his last words, were they only flattery or . . .?

But the other continued, 'Never mind, my silent friend, it will

all come right some time, believe me'; and jovially tapping him on the shoulder he added, 'I can see you are not a bad man and . . . and . . .'

Not a bad man! No, he did not suppose he was, as bad men went. But again there was a hint of something hidden, disquieting.

But the stranger cut short his serious vein. Brusquely changing the subject, he asked Gregory if he had ever been in St. Petersburg before.

Gregory admitted that he had not.

Where would he seek quarters there, inquired the stranger.

On the Vassilievski Island, was the answer. In some *Postojah Dvor* (some lodging-house), cheap but clean. No, he had no relations there, save for a distant cousin of his mother's. His address he knew and would go to see him.

But the stranger took out a minute note-book, wrote down something, and tearing out a small leaf handed it to him.

'It is the address of a small lodging-house in the Vtaraia Linea (Street No. 2) which will suit. You can get a bed with sheets there for 25 kopeks. You can say that you know me, if you like.'

Then, suddenly remembering that he had not been introduced, he took his pencil out again and, unceremoniously pulling the little paper out of Gregory's hand, wrote down the words 'Alexander Michailovich Sondrakov.' 'My name,' he remarked.

Gregory hesitated. Was he to give his—his real name? He was embarrassed. Putting the paper in his pocket, he merely nodded and kept silence.

Would the stranger not think it odd that he did not propose to alight at one of the establishments specially reserved for priests?

'All kinds of people stay there,' said the stranger—'priests and others. It is very well kept.'

It was uncanny—this unerring certainty with which that man answered his thoughts.

'Thank you,' replied Gregory, 'but I would as well stay alone.'

He had hardly spoken before he regretted his words. What could the other think of him avoiding the company of his fellow-priests? . . . In any case why had he said so! . . .

'I understand—quite understand,' remarked this redoubtable Alexander Michailovich Sondrakov.

The conversation ceased.

Less than an hour later the train rolled into the huge Nikolaievski station of St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER II.

GREGORY DIMITRIEVICH KOSSALNIKOV possessed a very good theoretical knowledge of St. Petersburg. In his far-away Carelian hamlet, the few who had been in the capital had so often related their adventures, real or imaginary, in the great city, so accurately described the position of the town, its colossal size, the many broad avenues, streets and parks, and the splendour of life there, that he had a picture of 'Piter' in his mind as of his provincial capital a hundred times magnified and embellished. In his religious days he had constantly hoped that he would never be compelled to visit this abode of sin where those lived who found it more difficult to enter the kingdom of heaven than a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. Even Petrozavodsk, the petty capital of his province, was too gay to fit into his world, and though he did not recall it now, he had often written foolish letters to his bishop praying that he might never be exposed to the temptations of the towns even by a temporary transfer.

But he was another man now, and eaten up with curiosity to behold what once upon a time he had never wished to see. After all, he argued, he had stepped into the world; hence, it was his duty to know the world and through actuality to discover truth.

His dream had always been to 'go south,' though he had never believed in its realisation. Of course, he knew that he was not getting away from the snow into those mysterious, distant lands where winter is not, but the 'Piter' of his vision was bathed in flamboyant sunlight—not always, maybe, but almost always—and overhung by a pale blue sky reflecting its glory and its light.

Instead, he reached St. Petersburg about three o'clock in the afternoon of a dull, grey day when a slight vapour hung uneasily over the landscape and the smoke of factory chimneys hovered unsteadily over the seemingly distant buildings. It was all profoundly impressive, but austere, not gay.

He did not know, until a traveller pointed it out to him, that the very few chimneys he saw emitting smoke belonged for the most part to the electric light plant which unskilled hands were putting to work for the first time since the beginning of the revolution more than three weeks ago. As the train approached the outskirts of the town, he did not realise that it was still idle, convulsed by riots and strikes—only there were many soldiers,

grim-looking, tall figures in long grey coats, standing motionless by the side of the double line of rail and at the street crossings near by with their rifles slung over the shoulder and bayonets fixed.

The metropolis of the empire had the aspect of an armed camp. Was it always thus ?

.

The Nikolaievski station he had always heard spoken of as one of the world's wonders. Now it seemed to him nothing more or less than a palace. 'How rich they must be here !' he murmured. 'I did not know there was that much money in Russia.'

Bewildered, he stood on the platform. It seemed lined with armed sentries, who unceremoniously shepherded him along with the crowd. In a little office he had to show his permit to travel. As elsewhere, a young cossack subaltern was on duty, but in common with all his men treated him with respect.

'You will have to show your personal papers to the police within twenty-four hours of arrival,' was all he said.

To Gregory this was bad news. He had not thought of that. There was only one thing to do—to see Andrei Alexandrovich Godalitski as soon as possible and take his advice. But it struck him of a sudden that he put much faith in a man he barely knew. What if he had forgotten him or—he trembled to think—what if he was not in St. Petersburg ? For a brief moment he regretted having set out on his journey. Would he not have done better to stay in his native Piatelnovolok ? What were all these people to him ?—strangers every one of them ; and those huge massive columns, these gigantic swinging doors—they oppressed him. He felt as if he could not live among this mass of stones. . . .

Mechanically he followed the crowd through the station, staring and dreaming as he went. Then he reached the front of the huge building and stood gazing upon the Znamenskaia Ploshad, an enormous square in the centre of which stood, as he knew, the statue of Tsar Alexander III on horseback. But the square was wellnigh empty save for a picket of cossacks leisurely passing by on the far side. One by one his fellow-passengers disappeared in the falling snow. They had been so many, and yet in the lone immensity of the sombre town the vast majority vanished mysteriously, noiselessly. He assumed that the place had many side doors, that they had sledges waiting for them and drove off.

Sledges ! He wanted one. He had always been told of the joyful throng of sledges waiting for passengers, the drivers enticing them

with sweet words like merchants ridding themselves of poor wares. How people talked ! As far as the eye could see there was not one. Yes, this must be the Nevski Prospect, this broad avenue running out of the square opposite—the pride of the capital. He had been told how magnificent it was, with its palaces to right and left and its many shops brilliantly illuminated the moment dark set in and all night long. But it was getting dark already, far sooner apparently than in his Carelia, and not a light was visible. The snow was falling thicker and thicker ; the big flakes were driven by the wind against his face so that he could barely see. Everything was of huge size here, evidently—even the snowflakes. Oh, that he had never come !

He was wrong, for even now further down the Nevski Prospect several of the electric street lamps here and there sent their light flickering through the darkness. They seemed uncertain of their precise rôle in the life of the town that day, and one by one went out again. It seemed passing strange.

A solitary policeman strode up, in keeping with his surroundings a veritable giant, pompous in his demeanour and oppressive like the stone pillars.

‘Move on, Batoushka, please,’ he remarked ; ‘no loitering here.’

His accentuation of Russian was different from any Gregory had ever heard, though he had many times spoken to people from the capital. It sounded hard, though the man seemed kindly.

‘I am waiting for a sledge,’ replied Gregory humbly. The fact that the policeman’s accent jarred on him he ascribed to his nerves.

But the grinding voice with its harsh roll of the letter *r* was again audible. ‘No good waiting for a sledge to-night, Batoushka ; there aren’t any.’

He wanted to ask where they had gone to, but dared not. With the air of a beaten dog he picked up his small bag and crossed the square.

Fortunately he was travelling light, for the broad Nevski Prospect seemed endless. He knew that to reach the river Nievâ he would have to walk straight along, and had heard how many versts it was, but had forgotten. The side streets therefore did not tempt him, but he wondered where the tramway was he had been told of. Efforts had obviously been made to clear the pavement, but to see the roadway covered with deep soft snow did not tally with anything he had heard. Save at isolated crossings it was barely passable.

However, he went on, for whenever he stood still for a moment he imagined another policeman of huge size and with rattling *r's* telling him not to loiter.

Why should not a man loiter? he asked himself. He certainly had not stood in anyone's way, seeing there was nobody. But perhaps that was their way in the towns. . . . They were different, no doubt.

A man loomed out of the darkness, moving slowly along the wall of the houses as if he were frightened to show himself in the street. Just then the high electric lamp gave another flicker, its feeble light slanting through the falling snow. The man seemed wretchedly clad and had a hunted look. He appeared to hesitate as to whether he should go on or not.

'Good-day,' said Gregory as if he were passing a stranger in the still forest.

'Good-day, comrade,' replied the other in a husky voice. But he seemed reassured and passed on.

So they call one another 'comrade' here, mused the man who had exchanged Carelia for the great world of St. Petersburg and felt bewildered. But the other turned back, and drawing near said:

'I say, comrade, are the cossacks still in the square?' He pointed towards the Nikolaievski station.

'What square?' asked Gregory nevertheless, for fear of a mistake.

'On the Znamenskaia Ploshad,' explained the other.

'I saw a picket passing——'

'With machine guns?' was the next question.

'What is that?'

The other looked at him in amazement. Then he just shrugged his shoulders.

'You saw nothing, then?'

He does not rattle his *r's*, this man, thought Gregory, but speaks like anybody else.

'Yes—just some cossacks, as I told you,' he said in a loud voice.

'Many?'

'No.'

'Mounted?'

'No.'

'Thanks—comrade.'

Suddenly the stranger raised his head as if startled by a sound

audible only to him. Then, before Gregory could recover from his surprise, he set off running and was lost in the darkness.

What remarkable people, he thought!—not at all what one would imagine. . . .

He went on.

He had not gone much further before he heard a shrill whistle and the sound of voices in front of him. He could see no one, so he proceeded. Then, sharp and clear, the report of a rifle rang out from somewhere on the opposite side of the street. He was frightened now, for it was all so mysterious.

Instinctively he skirted the wall of the houses as he had seen the stranger do, yet went on as fast as his feet would carry him. But it was hard going, for in places the snow had not been cleared away even on the pavement.

Before he knew where he was he ran into a number of men. They stopped him. One had an electric torch which he turned on him. So bright was the light that he dared not look at it.

But, whoever he was—this man in front of him—he lowered the torch. 'That is not the fellow,' Gregory heard him say, addressing someone else he could not see. The light of the torch then falling on the figure facing him, Gregory observed that he was in uniform. There appeared to be four or five soldiers more standing behind—all cossacks.

'Hast thou seen anyone?' the torch-bearer asked. Whether he was an officer or a sergeant was not clear.

'No,' replied Gregory thoughtlessly. He felt relieved to see soldiers.

'Sure?' repeated the other.

'Well, no—one man I saw'; and in answer to questions he described the stranger as best he could.

'Did he say anything?' they wanted to know.

He retailed the conversation.

'Batoushka,' said the one who had spoken to him first, with his torch now pointing to the ground, 'excuse me, but hast thou papers on thee?'

Gregory was glad to be addressed in the second person, but would have been hurt had he realised it was because the speaker set him down as fresh from the country.

'I had to give up my permit to travel at the station,' he stammered.

'Yes, I know,' replied the other, 'but thy passport. Let me see it.'

Gregory dropped his untidy bundle of personal belongings—for it could hardly be called a bag—on the ground and began fumbling in his pockets. A soldier picked up the parcel and held it for him.

'Hurry up, please, Batoushka,' said the man with the torch a little severely; 'we can't wait all night.'

The passport emerged from the depth of a pocket. The other scanned it by the light of his torch.

Just then another shot was audible in the distance, then several others rang out close by.

'All right, Batoushka,' said the other hastily. 'Go on quick.'

Before Gregory could make up his mind as to who was 'to go on quick,' the soldiers or he, they were gone. He heard the tramp of their feet. They were running towards the square.

In the direction of the square a shot, then another, then many—a regular fusillade.

Where was his parcel? On the ground again? Yes, it was. He picked it up and made off, keeping as close to the wall as he could.

For a long time he tramped on thus, half running, half walking. Every now and again he thought he heard distant shots, but could not tell for certain. His ear might be deceiving him. It all seemed so very unreal, on the Nevski Prospect of the capital of all places—so utterly unreal. Yet, it was somehow true. . . .

Yes, here in the darkness, shown up by the occasional flicker of the high street lamps, were those stone houses of the imperial city. Stone houses all of them, as he had been told. That at least was true. . . .

He had seen some before in Petrozavodsk, but never so many—and some had big, solid iron shutters on a level with the street. These must be the famous shops. But they were far from being lit up all night—far from friendly looking, more like the casements of a fortress—like the gates of a prison. At least so he imagined, for he had seen neither—as yet—but soon might, if he were arrested because he did not get his passport viséd at the police station within twenty-four hours of arrival for fear of being denounced to his bishop, sent before the Holy Synod—and then, maybe, secretly to Siberia.

He shuddered. In this vast country of his he was now nothing more than a fugitive animal, he reflected—at least in the eyes of others—and the physical fear he felt was a criminal's dread of apprehension for past misdeeds. What misdeeds?

He hurried on without thinking. Yes, there were shots in the distance—he trembled—beyond a doubt, shots—human beings killing one another. That, then, was what revolution meant. . . .

He was out of breath. But he went on—on—like that night—that first night in the lone wood after he had left Piatelnovok—only that this was not a fur-trapper's path.

At last he came to the end of the long avenue. The electric street lamps were brighter there, their light steadier. As he had heard, the Nevski Prospect now bent to the right towards the Winter Palace of the mighty Tsar, and just before he reached it he would find, branching off to the left, the Dvorzovi Most (the Palace Bridge) over the Nievá.

Yes, this must be right, for on the opposite side there were no longer houses, but trees. That must be the Alexandrovski garden. Trees, thank God, trees! . . .

He felt better for seeing them. All was not stone, iron and police and cossacks and—and . . . He greeted them like old friends.

But what was this in front of him? Across the street a cordon of troops? Yes—here close by him six or seven men, and another, evidently an officer.

'Halt!' he heard someone shout. He stood still.

The man he thought was the officer came up to him.

'Your papers,' he said roughly.

This time Gregory produced his passport more quickly. For one thing there was enough light for him to see what he was doing. It was less terrifying.

'Whither art going, Batoushka?' asked the other, more friendly. He folded up the pass and returned it.

'To the Vassilievski Island,' replied Gregory humbly, 'to seek quarters.'

'A stranger, I suppose?' asked the other.

'Yes.'

'I advise thee to make sure of what thou canst get, and that quickly,' was the fatherly advice tendered. 'It is not safe to be out to-night.'

'Why?' asked Gregory naïvely.

'Hoo!' said the officer, shrugging his shoulders. 'I suppose thou knowest enough, Batoushka, to supply an answer to thy question thyself. They are mad again to-night—the Reds—and all on the warpath; but—but . . .'

He seemed to have lost his thought.

'I have been held up once already,' explained Gregory, reassured by the other's kindness. 'It is the first time I have been in Piter, and I did not know——'

'The first time!' interrupted the other. 'Batoushka, thou hast not chosen the best of days. Thou art a bit of a Jonah,' he laughed. 'Dost thou know where to go?'

'No,' admitted Gregory. 'I have the address of a boarding-house—an inn well spoken of in the Vtaraia Linea on the island—No.—let me see now, No. 6, I think. Dost thou know it?'

He fumbled in his pocket for the slip which the stranger in the train, Alexander Michailovich Sondrakov, had given him. Somehow, he seemed to find anything but the paper he wanted.

The officer smiled. 'No, I do not know it,' he said; 'there are a good many inns hereabouts, Batoushka.'

'I wanted a sledge,' resumed Gregory, finding the address at last, but the officer took no interest in it. 'It is No. 6, as I said,' he continued, 'but a sledge I could not find.'

The officer smiled. So did some of his men.

'I think here is one coming,' said a soldier who seemed to be the tallest man Gregory had ever beheld. Compared with him even the giant policeman at the Nikolaievski terminus with the rattling r's seemed a mere infant.

Everybody looked round. Sure enough there was one. The officer hailed it.

'Take the Batoushka to No. 6 Vtaraia Linea on Vassilievski Island, you son of a gun,' shouted the officer as the sledge drew near; 'and let us have no nonsense about it. Understand?'

'I am listening, sir,' said the driver deferentially, this being the stereotyped military answer in vogue in Russia.

The giant soldier helped the priest into the sledge and lifted in the luggage with the pompous demeanour of a Parisian lady's maid handling a puppy dog. But in so doing he broke the string, and blushed like a child.

'Never mind,' said the Batoushka to the giant; 'that's all right.' He was only too thankful to be taken care of.

'You need not worry,' remarked the officer kindly; 'all is quiet over there.' He pointed in the direction of the island. 'The Petropávlovsk fortress still stands'; and he laughed like one enjoying a good joke.

'But mind, Batoushka,' he continued after a while, 'the driver is to be reported to the police to-morrow if he gives the least trouble.'

Then he leant over the sledge and, grasping Gregory's hand, added in undertones, 'It's all right: I've paid the driver.'

The horse gave a start, and off went the sledge like lightning.

Gregory crossed the Nievá, and his heart quivered with joy. The Nievá!

And, sure enough, out of the dark loomed the black mass of the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul—Petropávlovsk, the Russian Bastille.

Far from giving the least trouble, the driver hurried like one possessed. Less than ten minutes later he stopped with unerring certainty before a house in a dimly lit street.

'This is No. 6 Vtaraia Linea, Batoushka,' he said, turning round. A man in uniform rushed out and carried in the luggage.

Gregory wanted to give the driver 30 kopeks, which he had been told was the normal fare from the Nikolaievski station to the Vassilievski Island. For many things were cheap in St. Petersburg in those days. But the man refused.

'Thank thee, Batoushka,' he said; 'I am paid already and, besides, glad to help thee. The Guards' officer did not know, but I am not one of those that give trouble. Pray for me, Batoushka, instead, because my wife is ill and also that this nonsense may soon stop. Good-bye!'

He disappeared. So that had been a Guards' officer. Heavens! Gregory stepped inside the inn.

'How far is it from the Nikolaievski station to the Dvorzovi bridge?' he asked the porter.

'Three versts, sir,' was the reply.

He thought these were the longest three versts he knew.

'Is the *chozain* to be seen?'

'The proprietor,' the other corrected him deferentially. 'He will be down in a minute. In the meantime, I think No. 67 is available——'

He was still speaking when a fairly tall, extremely corpulent

middle-aged man appeared. Unceremoniously he scanned the priest with his small brown eyes, and his red good-natured face hardened, while his left hand nervously fingered the links of a huge watch-chain protruding about his waist, and so intensely yellow that it must be gold. With his right hand he twirled his moustache not less feverishly. He looked puzzled.

'You have a room?' asked Gregory, turning to him, since the porter's attitude left no doubt as to the fat man's superior authority.

'A room? Yes.' He seemed to ruminate in his mind.

'One—yes—I am not sure that it is ready, though. I regret it is dear.'

'How much?' asked Gregory humbly.

'I don't exactly know,' retorted the other, twitching and tearing his moustache—'not less than a rouble anyway.'

The priest—for that was what he was to them—looked worried.

'I have a paper here I was to show you,' he said.

The fat man seized the little slip on which was written 'Alexander Michailovich Sondrakov.' He looked up.

'I did not know,' he said. 'I beg your pardon.' He seemed more surprised than ever. 'An old friend,' he continued—'pray come in.' He extended his fat hand covered with big rings. 'It is as you like—No. 67 is my best room—25 kopeks will amply cover everything. Be seated!'

Gregory marvelled. Who was this friend of his—this 'Sondrakov'? Evidently someone of importance. The other's attitude had changed completely.

But he declined the proffered chair and expressed a desire to go to his room. Respectfully they showed him into a lift.

A few minutes later they were upstairs. The proprietor, for clearly that was what he was, had come also, making polite conversation and issuing orders to the personnel in stentorian tones.

'Pardon me,' he repeated, when they were alone in the room, 'I did not know you knew Gospodin Sondrakov. It is an honour for me, I assure you, to have you in my house.'

All the while he seemed to wash his hands in some imaginary basin, so hard did he rub them.

It was impossible to say who was the more nonplussed, the guest or the proprietor.

Gregory intimated that he was tired. The other seized the

hint, and after making sure that there were enough candles—the electric light, as he explained, was ‘unavoidably’ not available—and ordering a lamp and some food for the stranger, he retired. ‘I trust you will find everything all right.’

Indeed it was! They brought him tea, poured out in neat, richly ornamented china cups—not in glasses as he was used to—caviare, cold meat, radishes, bread, butter and cheese. Even the salt they had was powdered. Everybody busied himself around him, for no apparent reason—the chambermaid—the waiter . . .

The room was scrupulously clean, the bed the most luxurious he had ever seen, with new sheets and a mattress beneath them which somehow seemed resilient.

There was nothing he could do that day, so, wearied with his exertions, he turned to sleep.

CHAPTER III.

He did not dream of the past that night, nor did he rise early as he had intended to, but overslept himself.

When he woke up he could hardly believe that he was in St. Petersburg. . . .

It was nearly noon and essential that he should hurry to Andrei Alexandrovich Godalitski's quarters to take his advice on the urgent question of reporting to the police.

First he went to a small restaurant—a *traktir*, as it is called—and partook of a frugal meal, which with all extras and beer included reached the portentous sum of 22 kopeks. That done he took a sledge and drove off, giving Godalitski's address, which he had treasured for years.

There was nothing in this in the least surprising. Used as he was to peasant life, Gregory could not visualise the migratory existence of the townsman. The son of his mother's cousin once removed was to his mind a close relative, and he imagined him fixed at his abode in Piter exactly like a Carelian farmer in his *izbá*.

Nor had he as yet the least idea of distances in St. Petersburg, which, magnify it as he would, was to his mind still nothing more than another Petrozavodsk three or four times enlarged. That people of strange habits crowded in multiples of millions into agglomerations of stone houses called towns he had learnt at school or read of in books, but what it meant in reality he could not say.

Hence his surprise at the length of the drive, which seemed endless. How could anyone remember all these streets, road crossings, bridges, squares and side turnings? What if the driver was making capital out of his ignorance and, to increase his fare, deliberately driving him the wrong way. . . . ?

But the man unquestionably was honest. No, Piter was thus—there was no gainsaying it.

He reached a much poorer part of the town. There were even some wooden houses, which he hailed with delight. But all was dark, not a man or a woman in sight save soldiers, always equally severe-looking in their long grey coats and their rifles slung with bayonets fixed. Yet no one asked questions.

Thus at last he arrived, the driver halting before a high, uncleanly-looking stone house with iron-railed balconies echeloned one on top of the other. By its side in the open ran a narrow flight of stairs zigzagging right up as far as the eye could see—ending somewhere near the roof—closed on a level with the street by a locked gate. He wondered what it was for.

‘This is the entrance, Batoushka,’ shouted the sledge-driver, pointing to the centre of the building. He seemed amused about something. ‘Dost thou want me to wait?’

Yes, it appeared wiser to retain him, at all events until he had found his long-lost relative. He was certainly lost without him, and last night’s experience was not encouraging. So he promised faithfully that he would not be long, and besought the man to wait. He dreaded to inquire into the question of the fare. It was too terrible.

Bracing himself up, he staggered inside, for the door was heavy, not at all like any other—it closed behind him slowly of its own accord with a slight puffing sound. Moreover, he was haunted by strange imaginings. Had he not always understood that Andrei Alexandrovich was one of the most important men in the capital? He had been brought up on tales of his ‘cousin’s’ marvellous career. He was the man who conducted the imperial train, he had heard, when the great Tsar travelled with all his household—that fabulous train which flitted across Russia at the privileged speed of 90 versts an hour. Yet, assuming that this was his house, how was it his name was not writ in large letters over the door?

But here, by the right wall, just before the staircase was reached, was something posted up which seemed to be a list of names. He examined it attentively: First floor left, So-and-so;

right, So-and-so. He went on breathlessly—there! Eighth floor left: 'Andrei Alexandrovich Godalitski, assistant deputy-inspector of railway depot.'

Heaven be praised! He rushed upstairs—first floor, second floor, third. He was out of breath—a veritable mountain climb this. How strange that anyone should live on top of a tower! . . .

But he got there eventually. Sure enough, on the left side was a small yellow wooden door: a little printed card fastened to it with a drawing-pin showed the name.

He pushed against the door. It gave, for it was unlatched. He stepped into a narrow, dark, short, low corridor. On his left there was a kitchen, apparently in great disorder. He made a noise. . . . But no one appeared to be about, so he turned to the right and opened a door. There were only two, so one was as good as the other.

He beheld a room littered with papers and overthrown and broken furniture. Had anybody been fighting here? It looked like it. Tables, chairs, everything was upside down; a large mirror opposite was smashed, and on the wall hung torn pictures and photographs. Only a massive, coarse wooden desk still stood upright in the middle of the room, but all its drawers were flung open; clearly it had been ransacked by someone. He shrank back, returned to the corridor, and tried his luck with the next room.

As he entered an uncanny noise stopped him. Terror-struck, he gave a shriek and turned deadly pale. What was it? Out jumped a cat, which somehow had got locked into this room. It dashed past him and disappeared down the stairs at lightning speed.

Again he went in. It was a bedroom evidently, but in a far worse state than the other. There must have been a struggle here? No, not that—for it was systematically wrecked. No object, however small, seemed to have escaped the avenging hand of some unknown monster, bent on destruction, which lived here. Yet there was no sign of human habitation—no mark of blood or arms or anything else that could furnish a clue. He trembled from head to foot. Was his cousin a lunatic or . . . or . . . ?

He could find no solution to the problem. His eyes stared out of his head, his heart beat with excitement. Yet there was no danger: he was alone—clearly alone.

He searched the remainder of the flat. There was a pantry by the kitchen, a dark room, all equally ransacked and deserted. There was no one about. . . .

He thought of alarming the neighbours, but was afraid. What could he say? How explain his presence? He went downstairs again, broken-hearted, miserable. How could he find Godalitski?

Half-way down he met a little girl carrying up milk.

'Does Gospodin Godalitski live here?' he asked.

The girl shook her head sadly.

'Understandest thou my question, little one?' he repeated, trying to cajole her.

The little girl moved her head more gravely still. Was she a deaf mute, he wondered, or had he strayed into an asylum?—or was he himself not sane? . . .

'Mother said they took him away the night before last,' remarked the girl suddenly, in a shrill voice.

'Who took him away?'

She was evidently horribly frightened.

'Why—the police——'

'The police?' said Gregory, not trusting his ears.

But the little girl dropped her milk and ran as fast as her feet could carry her. He shouted to her to come back, but it was in vain. She had gone.

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Hurriedly he returned to his sleigh. 'Go home!' he said.

The driver looked at him, then leisurely adjusted the cushion on his seat and prepared to go.

At that moment out of a broad side street came the weird sound of men shouting. An instant later a crowd emerged, headed by an individual carrying a black flag. The road crossing immediately ahead of them suddenly seemed to swarm with people surging into the road unsteadily and with the dull, hushed rhythm of tramping feet and swaying murmur. What was that? Some men in the front row were brandishing revolvers.

From the house opposite came a shot. A cry and a shout, followed by a piercing yell—by many yells. . . . For a second all was still. Then an angry rising tide of dull murmur resounded, while several of the revolvers emitted flame into the air.

The driver had left his sledge and, shaking his spell-bound passenger by the shoulder, shouted:

'Get in, Batoushka, for the love of God! . . .'

But it was already too late. The driver was just whipping up the horse when from the direction in which they were to go a squadron of horse raced towards them. Where they had come from was not clear.

In an instant the uproar amid the crowd swelled to a turmoil. Shots went off in all directions, seemingly out of every house.

'Cassacki! Cassacki!' he heard the people shout.

Yes, there they were, the cossacks, sweeping past like the whirlwind, their small horses excited and beautiful to behold—the riders, wild-looking men, bending forward in their saddles, reaching for their lances in the front row, drawing their curved sabres farther back, their faces tense with the lust of the charge.

Somehow the crowd seemed to swerve, for the dull sound of a multitude of men moving in the thick snow was again audible. Gregory turned round. A few individuals ran to the shelter of the houses with savage shrieks of inarticulate terror. Were they stampeding?

Sharp and clear a shot rang out. A cossack in the third file fell forward on his saddle, reeled over to the right, and slid off his horse. It was all the work of an instant. Again a shot, another saddle emptied. The riderless horse pranced in the air; then, its head low, with a loud defiant neigh, continued the charge along with the others.

A second later—but that second he was never to forget—there rose to the heaven one yell—not of one voice, but of many, synchronised by a common terror—followed by the sound of a scuffle. . . .

The cossacks and the crowd had collided.

He could see nothing more, hear nothing more. Isolated shrieks reached his ear, shots were still dropping, but it was all a confused blend of impressions.

A belated cossack N.C.O. whirled past on his pony, swinging his *nagaika* and cracking it in the air.

'Chort vasm!' ('The devil take you!') he howled to the driver, whom his long leather whip narrowly missed. 'Begone!'

The driver required no second warning. His sledge seemed to have wings.

The last thing Gregory Dimitrievich saw of the scene was a cossack lying in the snow, face downwards, motionless.

It was ghastly.

There are moments in life when the wealth of impressions stuns the mind as a blaze of colour blinds the eyes. Gregory thought, but incoherently—visualised, but inaccurately. Everything seemed diffused, distorted, wanting in sequence and logic.

He drove away so fast that in the still streets along which the

horse careered he could not picture the events which were taking place behind him. Out of every side street he passed he expected to see charging *sotnias* of cossacks emerge, but none appeared. . . .

On the contrary, the military posts and pickets he passed were as grave, as solemn, as motionless as before.

What had happened? Slowly he recalled everything, bit by bit, as if it had occurred long ago. Yet he ransacked the memory only of the last five minutes, for life seemed to flow fast in these days. . . .

Then it dawned on him that he had not seen nor, under the circumstances, could see his cousin Godalitski. What was he to do, alone, without a friend to advise him? His twenty-four hours would soon be up: either he must go to the police or . . . or . . .

The home journey seemed shorter. . . . Quickly he got off the sledge, thankful to be back.

'How much?' he asked the driver.

'To anyone else but thee, Batoushka, five roubles.' He chuckled. 'For thee a rouble if thou canst spare it. Mark, for the *nagaika* narrowly missed me!'

He seemed vastly amused.

'It struck me all right,' remarked Gregory, pointing to his right arm. He had only just noticed a slight stinging pain. 'But its force was spent, thank God!'

The driver was very sympathetic. The two roubles offered him he would not touch for a long time. At last relenting, he accepted with profuse thanks and requests of prayers for his wife. She had run away, he explained.

'Don't go down there again, though, Batoushka,' was his parting advice. 'A bad neighbourhood! This railway crowd—they line up against the wall by the dozen. About what they deserve!'

And he drove off.

The man seemed to make light of a tragedy, thought Gregory. A 'bad neighbourhood,' was it? . . . Then, why did Andrei Alexandrovich Godalitski live there? . . .

Slowly he went indoors.

(To be continued.)

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